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DIALOGIC PRAXES IN GABRIEL MARCEL'S PHILOSOPHY:
HOPE FOR BEING IN A TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Margaret M. Mullan

December 2017

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Margaret M. Mullan

2017

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HOPE FOR BEING IN A TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD

By

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ABSTRACT

DIALOGIC PRAXES IN GABRIEL MARCEL'S PHILOSOPHY: HOPE FOR BEING IN A TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD

By

Margaret M. Mullan

December 2017

Dissertation supervised by Pat Arneson

In a technological age, communicators report conflicting experiences of presence and absence, understanding and misunderstanding, connection and isolation. Dislocation, distraction, and disconnection present challenges for dialogue and reveal a world broken by technology. A world broken by technology invites a response. Philosopher Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) offers insightful reflections on ways of being in a broken world. Marcel's philosophical reflections on body, reflection, intersubjectivity, and technology form the primary content for this dissertation.

In Chapter One, Gabriel Marcel, philosopher, playwright, and international speaker, is introduced as participant in the significant scenes of twentieth-century Paris, France. Marcel's philosophy and approach to the world emerged in response to his societal, technological, and cultural contexts. Throughout his life, Marcel returned to

significant themes that sound as movements in his thought. He attended to being as presence in the world. Chapter Two introduces Marcel's philosophy of the body as one's vital positioning in the world. One relates to the world in, with, and through one's body. Chapter Three summarizes Marcel's description of experiences of the broken world and Marcel's call to reflection upon one's own *being* in the world. Chapter Four presents Marcel's concepts of intersubjectivity as ways of being *with* and available *for* others in the world. This dissertation proposes that Marcel's philosophy of being in body, reflection, and being *with* others constitute dialogic praxes.

Chapter Five describes Marcel's reflections on relationships between technics and persons in changing environments, in relations to technics, and in interactions between persons. Technology presents human persons with a metaproblem, a problem beyond scientific solution. Chapter Six proposes Marcel's philosophy of being in body, attending to being, and being with others as a response to the problems presented by technology. A world broken by technology invites a response. Marcel offers warnings and hope for the *person*, a being who navigates a technological world.

DEDICATION

“Forget the former things, do not dwell on the past. See I am making something new. Now it springs up: do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland” (Isaiah 43).

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the persons: my family and friends, who have accompanied me somewhere closer to a land of promise. Your voices sounded in person and over phones. Your words reached me clearly or silently. The first invitation to “turn and listen” echoes throughout my journey weaving among the many voices encouraging me along this way springing up to life.

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Thank you to each person accompanying me along this journey. Pat Arneson, thank you for guiding me through this process. Our conversations opened doors for my own discovery. Ambitious deadlines moved me to start and stay in action all year. Belief in a person inspires and brings words-to-life: *poesis* in action. Ronald C. Arnett and Erik Garrett, thank you for your scholarship and insightful discussions inside (and outside) your classes that led to my discovery of Gabriel Marcel's philosophy. Thank you to all of my professors, Janie Harden Fritz, Calvin Troup, and Richard Thames for introducing me to many interesting authors and encouraging me to write. Thank you Garnet Butchart for introducing me to the teacher-scholar life: sharing insights along the ways back-and-forth to Fisher hall. Thank you Dean Swindal for always making time to talk about my graduate student journey. Thank you to Robert Woods for suggesting that I should make a life of teaching.

I am deeply grateful to my parents and to each of my siblings and their families. Mom, Dad, Wendy, Kathryn, Michael, Angela, Liz, John, Peter, Becca and Laura, you accompanied me before, during, and through this life-change from one mountain to the next. You have shared your wisdom, conversation, and homes with me, surrounding me with support to arrive at this accomplishment. I share this honor with each of you.

Thank you to my friends, sharing the grad school journey, above all Jenna and Rachel, your accompaniment through peaks and valleys has definitely helped me get through rough patches when the journey itself seemed impossible. Thank you to all my friends, also bearing the effects of the grad school journey: Dorrie, Annie, Lindsey, Mary,

Kirsten, among many more. Encounters with each of you over drinks or on sunny vacations have offered invaluable realms of rest. Thank you to my always-present friends along the way.

In the words of Gabriel Marcel, “it is a difficult road and strewn with obstacles, but it is by following this pilgrim road that we can hope one day to see the radiance of that eternal Light of which a reflection has continually shone on us all the time we have been in this world—that Light without whose guidance we may be sure that we should have never started our journey” (*Mystery II* 188).

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CHAPTER ONE

An Introduction to Gabriel Marcel: His Life and Historical Setting

Philosopher Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) offered significant insight into ways of being in and reflecting upon life in “the broken world” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 26). For Marcel, who lived and wrote in Paris, France, the broken world referred to feelings of uneasiness in one’s own life and one’s dissatisfaction in one’s relationships with others. In his theatrical play *The Broken World* written in 1932, Marcel used the phrase *broken world* to describe both the inner world of the main character Christiane and her Parisian social setting. Christiane communicated restlessness about her life. She reflected that socializing with other people left her feeling empty and that her relationships with friends and family were unsettling. In his philosophical reflection “On the Ontological Mystery,” Marcel suggested that people navigating these internal and external broken worlds lack an understanding of *being*. Marcel’s philosophy offers an interpretation of what it means *to be* in this broken world.

Marcel called himself a “*homo viator*,” or wayfarer, meeting fellow journeyers and talking with them about past or present philosophers, joining conversations already unfolding along the way, and voicing his approach to the journey (*Homo Viator* 7). He attended to how the person relates to the world *as* and *in* one’s body. He proposed interpreting the world as *being meaningful* because it signals a world beyond this world. He invited acknowledging the presence of others as co-present beings.

Marcel reflected upon a Western European twentieth century world marked by growing technological and scientific commitments. He studied the human person navigating technological realms and observed common experiences of dislocation and

insecurity (“Sacral”). He listened to his colleagues’ interpretations of this same world and their belief that this life was meaningless (“Ontological Mystery”). He attended to intersubjective interactions around him while traveling on trains and while attending social gatherings and found feelings of alienation or isolation from one another. He described these experiences of insecurity, meaninglessness, and alienation as happening in technological environments. Living in the modern world involves being in a world broken by technology.

Marcel’s descriptions of interactions in twentieth century settings sound similar to contemporary accounts of twenty-first century communication. A world broken by technology invites a dialogic response. Marcel’s philosophy calls attention to being in, with, and through body, reflecting, and being *with* others in the world. This project proposes that Marcel’s philosophy constitutes dialogic praxes as positioning, openings, and attitudes for dialogue. Marcel’s philosophy offers dialogic praxes for being in my body, attending to being, and being *with* others as response to the world broken by technology.

This chapter describes Marcel’s historical setting and introduces Marcel as writer and philosopher. The first section offers an overview of Marcel’s life. The second section describes this project’s interpretive approach to Gabriel Marcel’s ideas and terms. The third section details Marcel as a person in his historical setting. The fourth section describes the historical period of France from 1870s to 1914, Marcel’s childhood and his interest in drama. The fifth section describes the historical period of France from 1918 to 1940 and Marcel’s experiences of spiritual and musical realms. The sixth section

summarizes conversations about existence emerging in Europe from 1945 to the 1960s. The seventh section introduces general movements sounding in Marcel's philosophy.

Overview of Marcel's Life

A description of Marcel in broad strokes situates him predominantly in Paris, France, where he was born December 7, 1889, and where he died in 1973. Marcel grew up in an upper middle class Parisian family. Because his father was a diplomat for the French government, Marcel lived in Stockholm for some years as a child, travelled frequently with his father to various European cities, and was exposed to English and German ideas in his education and travels (Reinhardt). Marcel attended the *Sorbonne* and attained his degree and aggregation in philosophy in 1910. His thesis was titled "The Metaphysical Ideas of Coleridge Considered in Their Relation to the Philosophy of Schelling" (Reinhardt). After attaining his degree, Marcel was a philosophy instructor at various secondary schools until he left teaching in 1923. After the war, in 1918, he married friend Jacqueline Boegner with whom he later adopted a son.

Marcel created plays and philosophical works. Marcel began writing plays as a young man and would continue writing plays—about 20 in total—into the 1960s. Some of Marcel's most famous theatrical pieces were *A Man of God* (1925), *The Invisible Threshold* (1914), *The Broken World* (1933), and *The Thirst* (1938)¹ (Michaud). In 1923, he became a publishing house reader and drama critic for the literary and artistic journal *Les nouvelles littéraires*, as well as other journals.

Marcel carried out his philosophy as writer, reviewer, and international lecturer but never held a formal role as university professor (*Awakenings*). Marcel joined public

¹ Marcel identified what *he* considered to be his most significant plays, *Ariadne*, *The Thirst*, *The Sting*, and *The Sign of the Cross*, in which he shared "the most essential part of [him]self" (*Awakenings* 196).

philosophical conversations in 1927 when his philosophical diary *Metaphysical Journal* was published. Although not published until 1927, Marcel began writing his *Metaphysical Journal* in 1914 as philosophical insights about his personal experiences. Along with this diary, Marcel's primary philosophical works were *Being and Having: An Existentialist Diary* (1934), *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope* (1947), *Mystery of Being: Reflection and Mystery* (1951), and *Creative Fidelity* (1964). The two-volume *Mystery of Being* and his essay "On the Ontological Mystery" offer an overview of Marcel's philosophy (Treanor).

After his first major publication in 1927, Marcel began to travel and lecture, an activity that increased after 1950, until the end of his life. He lectured in all the major cities in Eastern Europe, the United States, Canada, South America, and Japan. He delivered the Gifford Lectures at the University of Aberdeen in 1949-50, published as *The Mystery of Being: Reflection and Mystery*, and he gave the William James lectures in 1961 at Harvard University, published as *The Existential Background of Human Dignity*. Marcel received the Grand Prize in Literature from the *Academie Française* in 1949 and the Frankfurt Peace Prize in 1964. He died in Paris on October 8, 1973.

Interpreting Gabriel Marcel

The corpus of Marcel's work is extensive. He covers expansive topics throughout various historical periods. In the study of his works, I attended to several interpretive challenges.

Marcel's philosophical works cannot be categorized according to a certain philosophical approach. He weaves through varying philosophical approaches throughout his lifetime. His writing addressed particulars and abstractions. Within the same

philosophical reflection, Marcel described the abstract traits of *being* while also calling for attending to *real*, sensory experiences. The section on naming his philosophy at the end of this chapter addresses Marcel's identification of his particular philosophical approach.

Marcel's philosophical descriptions and definitions do not progress linearly throughout his life. He circles back to themes he finds significant, themes such as *being*, the body, or the broken world. He frequently begins his reflection by identifying what he does *not* mean. At times, this project takes this approach to describe his work. Marcel's philosophical reflections uncover and recover his contemplation of events in his own life and the world around him.

In Marcel's reiteration of themes over the years of his writing, he sometimes clarified or negated his earlier writings. For example, in his 1971 autobiography *Awakenings*, Marcel suggested that readers would be correct to judge the first part of his *Metaphysical Journal*, written from 1914 through 1919, as unclear, because his earlier ideas seemed "so abstract and so awkward" (82). He followed this description with "I recognize that a philosophical reader, who would have become familiar with my later work, would be able to discover in these notes [*Metaphysical Journal*] the beginning of thoughts that I was to develop later on" (*Awakenings* 82). Marcel's ideas require readers to address his work as a whole over the years.

In this project, I address some of his ideas that are unclear in meaning. Marcel occasionally offers contradictory definitions for the same phrase. Marcel contended that one only *approaches* a description because words may be inadequate descriptors for

actual phenomena. Within my discussion of his texts, I specify these ambiguities in his definitions.

Various translations are offered for Marcel's texts. Initial translations of Marcel's French texts have been translated again for reprints. In author introductions, Marcel offered insight on some of the translations of his works into English. He found certain French words he used did not translate accurately into English. I mention his clarifications on the translation as footnotes in the corresponding discussion. The French word "technique" provides particularly challenges and is addressed in Chapter Five.

At times, Marcel uses italics and hyphens for emphasis. In some of Marcel's discussions of philosophical terms he offers different descriptions for common words like "being" or "being with." Sometimes, he italicizes the word in his text for emphasis. I maintain his italicized words in the quotes. I also italicize words if I am discussing a particular dimension of a word. Occasionally, I use hyphens for emphasizing a connection between words like "being-in-body" or "in-the-presence-of." If I have added the hyphens, I will not use quotation marks around the hyphenated phrase.

Marcel mainly uses the masculine pronoun and subject in his texts. To provide a consistent tone in this interpretation of his texts, I use the masculine pronoun, one, and person.

This project joins extensive and significant discussions of dialogue. Marcel did not offer extensive discussion specifically about dialogue. His philosophy addresses dialogic themes of being *with* other persons. This project proposes that Marcel's philosophy provides dialogic praxes. In the last section of each chapter I explicate how Marcel's philosophy of body, reflection upon the world, and philosophy of

intersubjectivity imply dialogic praxes. The closing chapter brings Marcel's philosophy alongside contemporary conversations about dialogue. This work unfolds in conversation with varying descriptions of dialogue.

Dialogue has been described and defined from varying religious, philosophical, psychological, and phenomenological perspectives. In a chapter introducing a significant book *The Reach of Dialogue*, Kenneth Cissna and Rob Anderson highlight various schools of dialogue, associated with Martin Buber, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Hans Georg Gadamer, as engaging differing descriptive characteristics for, theories of, and praxes in dialogue. Dialogic theory resists unifying characteristics and invites difference in attitudes of, approach toward, and understanding of dialogue (Wood). A study of dialogue includes a shared commonplace understanding of dialogue as “the idea that any utterance or act is always responding to and anticipating other utterances and acts” (Wood xvi). In response to “other utterances,” this project joins discussion about dialogue.

This project engages Aristotle's description of praxis “the actions by which humans go about their everyday life as members of communities” (1141b 7-22). Aristotelian praxis is theory-informed action. Aristotle's praxis includes reflective action and actions done as a person situated among other persons. This project uses the plural praxes to indicate a multiplicity of ways of acting.

I view Marcel's philosophical ideas as taking what Ronald C. Arnett and Pat Arneson describe as “additive approach” (108). Marcel's ideas assume an additive approach because he “took what existed and built upon the foundation available in a given historical moment” (Arnett and Arneson 109). His philosophical texts reveal his

additions to existing ideas and his responsiveness to adapting ideas in particular situations. In a postmodern approach to understanding Marcel's philosophy, this dissertation notes the differing descriptions *given* to Marcel's ideas but attends more extensively in later chapters to Marcel's *texts* as explorations of being in the world.

Introduction to Gabriel Marcel: A Being in a Situation

To introduce Marcel, person, philosopher, and dramatist, this section addresses historical periods and significant moments in Marcel's life. One's philosophy of communication emerges in how one is "communicatively situated in the lived world" (Arneson 7). Marcel uses the phrase "being in a situation"² to describe how a person participates in the world (*Mystery of Being* 1: 125). A person experiences being-in-the-world as simultaneously happening to oneself and as an event in which one actively participates (*Metaphysical Journal* 137). Marcel was shaped by certain elements of the historical moment and acted within and upon his world.

The following sections offer macro-level descriptions of France that form the background within which Marcel lived and wrote. This discussion describes some features of the political, technological, philosophical, cultural, and religious realms shaping Marcel's historical period from late nineteenth-century through mid-twentieth century France. This discussion is divided into three acts, or time periods, in which Marcel lived. The first time period spans from 1870 through the Great War, or World War I, beginning in 1914; the second time period includes the Interwar years, from 1918 through 1940; and the third time period covers the years after World War II, 1945 through the mid-1960s.

² Marcel defines one's situation as "the unity of the situation appears to those 'involved' in it as essentially being a datum given [to consciousness] but at the same time as something that permits of and even calls for their active intervention" (*Metaphysical Journal* 137).

The events of these years shape and emerge in Marcel's reflections on the human person. Acts one and two address Marcel's life in Paris, France including macro-level descriptions of the entirety of France. The first two acts address significant environmental elements in France within which Marcel's thought and life were shaped. Act three addresses the particular philosophical conversations taking place after World War II. Act three focuses more particularly on philosophical discussions as context for this exploration of Marcel philosophy. These backdrops are painted in broad generalizing strokes that necessarily abstract the particular details. Marcel was born into and grew up in this first act, took on an emerging creative role in Paris life in the second act, and became an international public figure in the third act.

Within each time period, key events shaped Marcel's life and thought. Marcel's philosophy was infused with his experiences of spirituality, music, theater, and philosophy. These realms were not demarcated from one another in his work but blended and transitioned into one another in various expressions. He viewed his own work as being shaped by and dealing with "three concentric rings" of music, theater, and philosophy (qtd. in Hanley "Postmodernism" 122). Katherine Rose Hanley suggested that Marcel's rings refer to realms of "experience and communication," where music captures one's innermost realm; drama deals with real life problems enacted by living actors; and philosophy expresses abstract reflection upon one's awareness ("Postmodernism" 122). Marcel first used music and drama to express his inner world and later described his experiences through his philosophical reflections ("Foreword" xiv). This chapter summarizes his musical and dramatic work. The following chapters focus on his philosophical reflections.

Marcel's life experiences cannot be strictly categorized within the described historical periods. His reflections upon his own life or the world weave back-and-forth as reflections on his past and present situations. His works blend earlier ideas he first addressed in plays or in his diary entries. While certain familiar themes sound throughout his writings, he also changes his interpretations of experiences in the re-reflecting upon ideas. Other times, Marcel simply returns to earlier philosophical reflections and offers his insights from a different time in his life. Thus, Marcel's philosophical explorations cannot be divided into strict chronological order.

In keeping with Marcel's recursive style, this section offers descriptions of movements throughout Marcel's life started or expressed during the particular historical period. The first historical period, Paris from the 1870s through World War I in 1914, offers the backdrop for Marcel's childhood and his interest in drama. Marcel's dramatic works continue throughout his life beyond this historical period. The second historical period, Paris from 1918 through 1940, sets the stage for Marcel's religious conversion and his entry into international philosophical conversations. This section addresses Marcel's spiritual and musical explorations happening approximately during this period. The third section addresses philosophical conversations existence happening in post World War II Europe. The section on existential reflections coming to the fore in 1945 France provides important background for Marcel's philosophy. Although chronologically Marcel's philosophical journeys span all three historical periods, his philosophical history will be addressed in full as a separate section.

First Act, 1870s-1914: Marcel's Childhood and Interest in Drama

Significant environmental elements in France form a backdrop within which Marcel's thought and life were shaped. Paris France, in the 1870s to 1914, was marked by the growing presence of technology. Events in Marcel's childhood open realms of experience for him, as openings for mystery. In this first act, Marcel's interest watching and creating theatrical plays emerges as a life-long passion.

Historical Period: Paris, France

Marcel's Parisian setting was marked by varying characters, discourses, events, and interpretations. France, as a modern nation, blended a multiplicity of cultures, classes, political, and religious beliefs. Jill Forbes and Michael Kelly in *French Cultural Studies* described modern France's history as a nation and culture springing from beginnings in the Enlightenment and Revolution of 1789 as the founding of the secular French Republic. France was shaped by its existence alongside other nations in Europe and the world and by its class divisions among groups including laborers, the bourgeois middle-class, and the aristocracy (Forbes and Kelly). Historians and French citizens in the Interwar years named the pre-war period of French history from the 1870s through the Great War of 1914 *La Belle Époque* meaning "the Beautiful Era." This discussion takes a snapshot of modern France at the turn of the century, capturing images of technological, philosophical, cultural, and political features of *La Belle Époque*.

The year Gabriel Marcel was born, 1889, marked a centenary celebration of the founding of the French republic and included the completion of the Eiffel Tower, a symbol of the role of industry and science in modern France. Gordon Wright in *France in Modern Times* described the significant growth in French industrial production and

urbanization emerging from the 1870s leading up to the war in 1914. During this period, more people experienced improved living conditions with better means of transportation and increased electricity (Wright). World Fairs and French National Exhibitions displayed technological and scientific achievements including France's development of electricity, colonial imports, and visual arts (Hewitt 19). According to Gordon Millan, Brian Rigby and Jill Forbes, the World Fairs, springing from the concept of a French National Exhibition, revealed ongoing, international belief in the primary role of science and technology. Growing participation in industrialization shaped the daily life and beliefs of the French.

Modern commitments to technology and science accompanied philosophical and educational belief in the value of scientific methods and interpretations. Nineteenth century industrialization accompanied increased focus on scientific education according to Auguste Comte's positivism that proposed one could develop laws about human behavior (Millan et al. 20). Comte and Emile Durkheim promoted sociology as a "science of human behavior" (Randall 519). In late nineteenth century France, commonly held medieval Christian beliefs in metaphysical or religious realities had shifted to beliefs in the physical, materiality of naturalist realism (Schloesser). Karl Marx's interpretations of social and historical forces also offered an understanding of the world through a lens of materialist atheism (Schloesser 23). Materialist, naturalist, and positivistic interpretations discouraged possibilities for the realities of "mystery," "grace," and "freedom" (Schloesser 27). Scientific interpretations became authoritative approaches to the world.

During the early twentieth century, French educational centers like the *L'Université de Sorbonne (Sorbonne)* remained educational proponents of modern

commitments to Descartes' rationalism, positivism, and historicism (Schloesser 49; Wright). Wright suggested that Henri Bergson, professor at Collège de France, countered this positivism and determinism by calling for the study of inner movements or intuitions. Bergson described an *élan vital*, meaning "a vital principle," functioning as a creative force within a person (218). This vital principle bore an immaterial dimension inaccessible to empirical reasoning. Bergson's attention to a presence of intuition within the person stood in distinction from education in rationalism or Kantian idealism. Bergson's lectures were continually crowded with students, and his ideas were a common subject of prewar intellectual conversation (Millan et al.). Modern French educational and philosophical conversations shaped and were shaped by beliefs in the role of science to interpret the world.

As a technological and cultural center, Paris witnessed technological change through development in public spaces like parks, boulevards, theaters, and cafés. During this period, increasing numbers of Parisians gathered in public settings like one of the 24,000 cafés or in private homes sharing in leisurely and serious exchanges of ideas and experiences (Millan et al.). One genre of Parisian theater, named boulevard theater, emerged in this period and became popular entertainment for upper-middle-class audiences. This genre continued entertaining the French until the 1960s (Hewitt 250). boulevard theater included common settings of Parisian homes, simple characters, plots dealing with familial conflict, some dissatisfaction with social mores, and some satirical humor (Hewitt 251). Theaters offered Parisians a setting for public engagement with themes and discussions significant to the historical moment.

Artists and writers also offered interpretations of the French experiences. Parisian artists and writers, moving away from commitments to realism, explored avant-garde expression like Fauvism, symbolism, and Cubism. Art movements involved a response to societal changes (Harrison et al.). Fauvism reflected a spirit of impulsive expression. Artistic symbolism wove dreams or spiritual experiences into paintings. Artists exploring Cubism sought to depict life scenes as if situations were experienced simultaneously from multiple perspectives (Harrison et al.). During this time, Paris grew as a cultural gathering place for artists and musicians from France and other countries (Millan et al.). Parisian artists and writers reflected growing commitments to avant-garde interpretations of the world.

French allegiance to science and knowledge accompanied increasing French secularization, stemming from the French Revolution's rupturing of the union between the Catholic Church and French government. Since the French Revolution, French political secularism had markedly turned French philosophical and cultural belief away from the religious or interpretive authority of the Catholic Church (Hewitt). The Dreyfus Affair,³ taking place in Paris from 1894 until 1906, revealed still-present partisan politics associated with religious beliefs (Hewitt). In particular, the Dreyfus events revealed within Marcel's family differing opinions on the role religious belief should take in politics (*Awakenings* 43). Amid modern French secularization, religious perspectives still appeared in public discussions.

³ A government worker, Alfred Dreyfus, was accused of sharing government secrets with Germany. Author Emile Zola, and other public figures, contested the accusation as unjust treatment promoted by anti-Semitic political and monarchist parties in France. Conservative Catholic leaders sided with the French military against Dreyfus. In the end, Dreyfus was exonerated. The Dreyfus Affair revealed growing partitions in French politics with the growth of Leftist party suspicion toward Catholics and military. (Wright)

With increased contact among other cultures and nations, France participated in the territorial disputes implicated in national boundaries and trade. According to historian Charles Rearick, during the Great War from 1914 to 1918, French political factors initially shaped French nationalism as a rallying call to protect the nation. As the war continued to devastate the French people, they began to question the cost of protecting the French nation state (Rearick). Modern war technology was being used in the name of protecting a French nation and would significantly affect the persons within this nation. Modern France continued its commitment to technological advances at the cost of war.

Technology and reason promised better lives for the French people. Marcel was born into a modern France that celebrated and promoted scientific and industrial progress. Distinct voices like philosopher Bergson or avant-garde artists sounded a call to attend to vital or living forces still present in the human person. Marcel grew up in a Paris shaped by modern commitments and opening to alternative interpretations.

Marcel's Childhood

Marcel described his childhood as being marked by loneliness and longing (*Awakenings*). His mother passed away when Marcel was four years old, and his dad's second wife was Marcel's aunt. He remembered his mother as a "being who had vanished" yet "remained present and mysteriously with me throughout my life" ("An Essay" 112). He felt loneliness as an only child and in the competitive environment of his Parisian secondary school (*Awakenings* 50; "Essay" 111). A character in one of Marcel's plays claimed, "There is only one suffering: to be alone" (*The Rebellious Heart* 205). From an early age he longed for encounters with others.

Marcel's childhood experiences of absence revealed his longing for the presence of others. His desire moved him to search for others present in physical or metaphysical realms. Because he was an only child, Marcel invented imaginary brothers and sisters with whom to converse (*Awakenings*). His fictitious "imaginary interlocutor(s)" were his "first characters" for his plays (*Awakenings* 59). Throughout his childhood and early adult life, Marcel also sought to make sense of the death of his mother as he wondered about life-after-death. He tried to discover if his mother lived on in a distinct form.

He connected his search for experiences of a world-beyond-this-world to his encounters with music and spiritual presences. Even as a child, Marcel responded to his personal experiences with a belief that this metaphysical, spiritual realm was real and a conviction that his experience of transcendence⁴ was valid (*Awakenings*). Marcel found in his own experiences signs of a reality beyond his material world.

Marcel's Interest in the Drama of a Broken World

In the Parisian setting of widespread interest in theater, Marcel's fascination with drama emerged when he was young and remained a passion throughout his life. At an early age, Marcel developed characters, wrote dialogues, and created plots for plays. Attending Parisian plays from his childhood, Marcel felt drawn to theater as "a privileged form of expression" ("Essay" 106). In 1913, he wrote his first published play *Le Palais Sable*, The Sand Castle, at age 24. In his plays, Marcel explored themes like mystery, intersubjectivity, or death. Years after writing his plays, he recorded his philosophical reflections on these same themes (Gallagher 97). He wrote about themes he encountered

⁴ Marcel differentiated his description of transcendence from his contemporaries' definitions. For Marcel, transcendence did not signify realities impossible to access in the material world. One *could* experience transcendence within one's own inner world. A person strains toward transcendence and also may experience transcendent presences calling upon the person (*Mystery of Being* 1). Chapter Three addresses Marcel's description of transcendence.

in his daily life in Paris and in his imagination. He found that “the complex character of human situations” signaled the “essentially dramatic aspect of human life” (*Awakenings* 52). Marcel suggested that by watching human conflict play out on the stage, the audience experiences some distance from their own conflicts, tries to make sense of these conflicts, and is better able to judge a way through their own real life conflicts (“Drama” 21-22, 27). Katherine Rose Hanley proposed that Marcel’s characters “enflesh and speak their dawning awareness, their tragic consciousness, of the conflicts and antimonies that affect their lives” (*Broken World* 21). Through onstage dialogues and character developments, Marcel explored particular human experiences.

In his introduction to a compilation of his plays, *Three Plays*, Marcel described his own dramatic works as a “Drama of a Soul in Exile” (“Drama” 16). The one in exile “has become a stranger to itself, who can no longer understand itself, who has lost its way” amid the broken world (“Drama” 16). Through drama, he reflected upon possible ways through this broken world. His plays also offered him a channel for sharing his lifeworld interpretations with participating audiences. He felt that in every play, he conveyed to each audience, “you are understood” (qtd. in Hanley *Broken* 27). Marcel’s plays connected him with others and brought him into conversation with fellow Parisians.

From 1923 until the end of his life, Marcel’s primary job was a publishing house reader and drama critic for the literary and artistic journal *Les Nouvelles littéraires*. He remained in contact with theatrical world throughout his life. He regularly attended and reviewed plays throughout his life. Edward Cioran stated that theater for Marcel “was not a diversion but a living experience” (73). Marcel immediately became absorbed in the play seeking to understand the unfolding events. Cioran had attended plays with Marcel

for over twenty years. According to Cioran Marcel's love of theater revealed his desire to be "in the presence of another human being" (74). While participating in the play, one comes into the presence of characters both really present on the stage and partly transcending the actual scene. Thus, drama hints of a reality beyond the material world.

Marcel participated in drama as writer or critic throughout his life. Dramatic texts, expressions, and actions shaped a continual backdrop in his life and philosophical reflections. During World War I, Marcel did not publish any plays, worked for the Red Cross, and began recording his philosophical search to understand what it means to *be* in this particular world.

Second Act, 1918-1940: Marcel's Exploration of Spiritual Realms

The drama of World War I opens the scene for Paris in the years after 1918 before World War II. The world between wars in Paris France was marked by a multiplicity of attitudes and experiences. Amid this interwar fragmentation, Marcel records and publishes his first philosophical works. He also experiences a spiritual encounter that significantly marks his life. Marcel's opening to spiritual experiences resembles his love for music.

Historical Period: Paris, France

The second act, France in the Interwar period 1918-1940, included a complex interplay of national and personal responses to the trauma of the Great War within emerging diversity in political and cultural experiences. A modern assumption, accompanying belief in the authority of science, was that with increased scientific knowledge and discovery, humans and human society would progress. Modern science promised to control the world and thus better lives (Hewitt). Modern education also

encouraged this belief in the power of the states to civilize cultures and make economies grow (Randall). As modern individuals progressed in knowledge of the material world, society was to also to improve.

In the early twentieth century, while nation states, economies, and society seemingly progressed, persons instead experienced increased distress in the name of this progress. During and after the war, French people questioned values like scientific success or protection of national interests (Schloesser). Modern science used at the service of expanding modern nation states had resulted in destruction in Western Europe, the opposite of progress. The Great War, serving the growing nation state, brought tragic consequences to the lives of modern men and women.

The Great War left ten percent of the French male population dead and many more severely wounded (Wright 306). The people of France exhibited a “profound sadness” at the experience of loss on individual and communal levels (Rearick 37). Henri Bergson commented at the start of the Great War that armies had “made their barbarism ‘scientific,’” and that war revealed the power and effects of technological weapons to destroy human life (qtd. in Schloesser 10). The wounded soldiers stationed on streets and in public places permanently reminded Parisians of the physical and mental wounds from war technologies. French persons responded in diverse ways to the trauma: by mourning, by escaping through leisure and entertainment, by turning to religion, and by engaging in political reform.

French culture in the 1920s and 1930s included an environment of escapism and frivolity. Writers and artists spoke nostalgically of “affluence and well-being” experienced earlier in the pre-war *Belle Époque* (Scriven et al. 55). People participating

in Parisian high culture called these interwar years, 1920 to 1929, *les années folles* meaning “the crazy years” (62). Paris’s Left Bank offered cultural gatherings for artists, writers, and composers. Begun in Paris in the 1890s, avant-garde art returned as artists sought to reveal “higher reality, the sur-real” beyond the real experiences of recent history (64, 65). Parisians watched films at the cinema. However, within these escapist experiences disconnected from the past, lay “an undercurrent of severe disquiet” (67) linked to “growing melancholy and sense of emptiness” (69). French gaiety was experienced as a superficial gild to underlying restlessness.

In the 1920s, some French intellectuals turned to religion for interpreting and engaging the world. Norman Tanner noted that the Catholic Church in Western Europe had positioned itself against the modern intellectual projects of Karl Marx and Charles Darwin since the late nineteenth century.⁵ In the 1920s, a Catholic renaissance emerged among literary figures in France (Schloesser). Catholic intellectuals, like philosopher Jacques Maritain and author George Bernanos, promoted a blending of eternal and modern values. Schloesser called this blending a “dialectical realism” that studied real experiences of dissatisfaction within a modern culture that opposed religious belief. Catholic intellectuals suggested that a longing for a supernatural world beyond the war-torn world could be found within persons (8). Compared with turn of the century Parisians, French public opinion in the 1920s included more openness to religious and metaphysical interpretations (Schloesser). In this Interwar France, the presence of interpretations distinct from modern scientific proposals reveals a divergence from modern perspectives.

⁵ For example, the Catholic Church condemned materialism as a denial of the spiritual realm in *Vatican I* in 1870 (Tanner). As well, Pope Pius XI’s *Divini Redemptoris* publicly addressed Marxism in 1937.

In the 1920s and 1930s, political Marxism emerged as another response to the disquiet following the Great War. The recent Russian Bolshevik revolution of 1917 provided an example of political Marxism reshaping a nation. The communist commitments to educational, political, and cultural reform in France grew throughout the 1920s and more significantly in the 1930s after the worldwide stock market crash in 1929 (Scriven et al.). Growing commitments to Marxism in France revealed developing philosophical and social explorations of ideas like the meaning of being human or religious or political consciousness.

Weighing in on these philosophical explorations, Catholic intellectuals also addressed the meaning of being human and of just ways of engaging politically, civically, and culturally. Instead of a capitalism-communism dichotomy, Catholic philosopher Emmanuel Mounier suggested a middle political and economic way known as *personalism*. Mounier's personalism called for attending to the whole person as spiritual, physical, and social (Scriven et al.). In 1930s France, lay Catholics began to associate with differing political parties and platforms. Some Catholic clerical leaders in France seemingly collaborated with rising Fascist groups throughout the 1930s and with the Nazis in Vichy, France. As well, some Catholic intellectuals began supporting communist and socialist political ideas (Hewitt). Interwar France witnessed simultaneous growth in opposite movements like Mounier's personalism and Marxism that invited or turned from religious interpretations of the human person.

Late nineteenth century and early twentieth century artists, writers, and philosophers, living in cultures shaped by these modern commitments, reported experiencing "fragmentation, ephemerality, and chaotic change" (Harvey 11). As

described, Parisians in the 1920s responded in varying ways by engaging in entertainment, by attending to political movements like Marxism, or by opening to spiritual experiences. In the 1920s, Marcel continued to write plays and work as a drama critic. Marcel reflected that in the late 1920s, he had been “aware of living in a broken world” (*Awakenings* 122). In response to this broken world, he was among the Parisians opening to spiritual experiences.

Marcel’s Experiences of Spiritual and Musical Realms

Marcel’s beginning philosophical reflections in 1914 reveal his questions about the meaning of this life and the possibility for life beyond this world. In 1914, he had begun to record his diary of philosophical reflections, later compiled into his *Metaphysical Journal*. Kurt Reinhardt noted that Marcel’s *Metaphysical Journal* reflects his search for explanations for personal and communal suffering or for signs of a life beyond this world. From his initial philosophical reflections and his first plays, Marcel revealed his ongoing search to discover if a spiritual realm transcended the material, physical world he knew empirically (*Awakenings*). In his 1971 autobiography included in *Awakenings* he described his life as a journey “On the Road, Towards What Awakening? Towards What Dawn? Towards What Light?” (79). His journey involved moving toward understanding about and loving encounters with persons in both physical and spiritual realms (*Awakenings*). He called his life journey an “awakening” (*Awakenings* 79). Awakening involves yearning toward and becoming aware of being in the presence of someone or something. For Marcel, experiencing spiritual and musical realms includes both active yearning and passive participation in the presence of an already-present realm. Throughout his life, his attentiveness to divine and supernatural presence emerged

in different forms of reflection on presence, music, suffering in war, and his personal experience of spiritual calling.

Marcel's study of presence appeared in his earliest works. In *Metaphysical Journal* and "Existence and Objectivity," Marcel's initial philosophy explored experiences that elude an objective description. Marcel interpreted his encounters with presence as unmediated and also real. From 1914 until 1929, although Marcel did not have his own experience of faith, he tried to describe what believing in supernatural presences might mean ("Essay" 119-120). Marcel saw experiences of faith as experiences of presence. He also described sensing transcendence while listening to music.

For Marcel, music was a sign of incommunicable realms. Throughout his life, he found a "liberating awareness" in listening to, writing, and playing music (*Awakenings* 59). Amid feelings of solitude, Marcel experienced music as a type of dialogue or shared experience of mystical realms (59). Listening to music meant experiencing music's "incantatory force" similar to the force of poetic words (58). In a wordless Mozart symphony, Marcel "recognized the voice of our incurable sorrow" and noted the interconnection between beautiful music with "the most deeply lived experience" (57). He described listening to or playing music as participating in and acknowledging a reality beyond this material world (Cain). He associated listening to music, especially Bach, to his religious experience of a supernatural world (Cain). Marcel's dialogue with and through music involved being in the presence of sounds as one is in another realm, a realm beyond.

During his World War I service, Marcel became attentive to real suffering and the possibility for spiritual realities. Because of his long-standing weak health, Marcel could

not enlist in the military in World War I, so he worked for the Red Cross searching for missing persons and communicating his findings to their families. His job involved cataloguing the missing and dead persons. Multiple people came daily to the office to inquire about missing relatives. Marcel worried that he would turn this into an objective task and become emotionally distant from his work (*Awakenings*). However, as people arrived, anguished by uncertain loss, Marcel continually felt “himself in the presence of great suffering” (93). This work altered Marcel’s approach to philosophy. In contact with real people suffering the loss of real loved ones, Marcel desired to reflect upon lived experiences. During this time, Marcel recounted brief experiences he called “metapsychical”⁶ (*Metaphysical* 175). His work in the missing persons office signaled to Marcel both the presence of spiritual realms and the need to attend to each particular person.

Although Marcel did not always identify with a particular religion or denomination, from his childhood, he was open to experiences of spiritual or transcendent presence. Seymour Cain described Marcel as a young man who felt neither repulsion nor attraction to religion and who viewed religion as a concept to be analyzed and evaluated for its philosophical possibility (22). He also demonstrated a growing attentiveness to belief in a divine presence beyond the natural world (*Metaphysical*; Reinhardt). Marcel attributed his personal experience of inexplicable presences to spiritual dimensions present in the world.

In 1929, at the age of 40, Marcel experienced “[his] conversion to Catholicism,” a formal acknowledgement of his belief in God (*Awakenings* 122). The experience

⁶ Cain stated that throughout his life, Marcel defended his belief that philosophers should allow for the possibility of “metapsychical” experiences that spring from a real source beyond one’s own mind (23).

happened as Marcel read a letter from François Mauriac, a French novelist who was a Christian. Mauriac had read Marcel's philosophical discussions of faith and belief published in *Metaphysical Journal*. In the letter, Mauriac invited Marcel to "abandon this kind of state of uncertainty" and simply believe in God and supernatural realities (*Awakenings* 123). Marcel described his experience of reading Mauriac's letter: "For the first time I have clearly experienced *grace* . . . this is indeed a birth. Everything is different . . . a world which was there, entirely present, and at last I can touch it" (*Being and Having* 15). Marcel became aware of "a world which was there" and which he now felt he could access.

Throughout his life, Marcel continued to speak about this coming into a world as a becoming aware of a transcendent world. In *Mystery of Being: Faith and Reality*, Marcel stated that in life "we must become aware that we are literally arched over by a living reality" (186). One becomes aware of this other, or supernatural, reality by hearing some communication, "solicitations—countless in number even if slight in substance—which come to us from the invisible world" (*Mystery Being* 2: 187). Marcel understood solicitations or calls from this other realm to convey that this realm was real. The call sounded from a source that Marcel placed both outside and within himself. On reading the letter from Mauriac, Marcel described what he encountered:

I experienced a kind of peace which would have been at once Life and Light. Never had I felt more free while having to decide by myself and for myself while being fully aware. It seemed to me that here Mauriac simply played the role of mediator between myself and an invisible power which certainly, was not

unknown to me, but on the contrary, using the words of Saint Augustine, more interior than myself. (*Awakenings* 123)

He experienced “an invisible power . . . more interior than [him]self” (123). The invisible presence used words that were “heard” by Marcel. Cain suggested that in many ways “Marcel’s philosophical stance is auditory, rather than optical” (14). Marcel’s belief in a transcendent world was a response to an inner calling that he believed to be real.

In the 1920s Parisian philosophical and literary milieu, religious themes garnered attention in literary and philosophical discussions. Thus, the known Parisian intellectual Gabriel Marcel’s conversion to Catholicism in 1929 did not appear extraordinary (Schloesser). Marcel’s attentiveness to divine presence even while exploring philosophical themes made him an uncharacteristic but not isolated voice. He promoted the validity of his religious experience.

During World War II, Marcel could not participate in military action due to his ongoing health issues, so he remained in Corrèze, a region of France, with his wife, who had begun to battle cancer. During World War II, he abstained from any connections with the Vichy government, and he moved back to Paris in 1943. His wife died in 1947 (*Awakenings*). Marcel again experienced the separation from his loved one, although with his wife’s death, Marcel spoke of a future reunion in a life-after-death.

Although already having participated in international philosophical meetings, after 1945, Marcel, among other philosophers of existence, continued as a speaker invited to share his philosophy internationally. Reflections offered by philosophers drew attention to significant questions sounding after World War II. In post-war Paris, studies of existence emerged in scholarly and everyday conversations.

Third Act, 1945-1960s: Conversations about Existence Emerge on an International Stage

The third act opens on France again emerging from war. Existential reflections sound with particular resonance among persons exhausted from bearing tragedies. In 1945, existential contemplations, although not new, emerged in public conversations. This section returns to the roots of existential reflections to describe twentieth century philosophies of existence. Marcel interacts with, and is in dialogue with, these philosophical and cultural discussions.

Existential Reflections Sound in Europe

During World War II, occupied France included vastly diverse experiences of the war—from collaboration with the Nazis in Vichy, France, to Jewish deaths in concentration camps, to French citizens resisting Nazi occupation. In 1945, France, again tragically seared by war, faced post-war trauma now compounded by division due to greatly differing war experiences. Post-war tribunals were set up to judge culpability for wartime collaboration (Hewitt). In the post-war Liberation period, French people stood before gaping holes of war, suffering, and death, questioning the meaning of life.

Adolph Hitler's planned annihilation of Jewish people and President Harry S. Truman's devastating use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki revealed a horrific capacity of humans to dispose of other humans. During and after World War II, questions emerged, What is life? What is existence? Why do I exist? Who is a human person? Who is less than human? How can one human treat another human this way?

At the close of the war, French philosophers and scholars who considered human existence—Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Albert Camus, Karl Jaspers, and Gabriel Marcel—offered reflections about experiences and the

meaning of existence. In the 1940s and 1950s, the study of existentialist questions and topics exploded in literary circles, university classrooms, and social conversations (Wright). These conversations addressed experiences of dread, anguish, and anxiety that people feel in real situations. Particular French philosophers Sartre, Beauvoir—and to a lesser extent—Marcel, became popular public figures (Bakewell).

This section summarizes existentialism as a philosophical conversation that was promoted by philosophers who had gained publicity post World War II. First, I discuss the name of the movement. Second I summarize key ideas from main precursors to existentialism, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and Husserl. Third, I offer themes studied by philosophers of existence such as situation, action, authenticity and meaning.

Philosophers associated with the existentialist movement did not all identify with the name existentialist. Only Sartre fully embraced the name existentialist (Reinhardt). Sartre built his philosophy upon his claim that “existence precedes and rules essence” (*Being and Nothingness* 175). Jean Wahl suggested that other philosophers—in distinction from Sartre—identified more as “philosophers of existence” (11). A philosopher of existence reflects upon meaning, being, and living in the world (Wahl). A philosopher of existence asks “what does it mean to be human?” or “what is the meaning of this experience?” (Bakewell 28-29). Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Jaspers, and Marcel accepted the name “philosophers of existence” to describe how they reflected on meaning, being, and living in the world (Wahl 11).⁷ Although avoiding identification with the name existentialism, these philosophers shared a study of existence.

⁷ Wahl also referred to philosophers Martin Buber, Nikolai Berdyaev, Lev Shestov and Miguel de Unamuno as contributing philosophies of existence (11).

Perennial questions about what it means to be human and to exist have sounded since ancient philosophical explorations by Socrates. Although gaining increased international notoriety after World War II, philosophers in the modern historical period had already been reflecting upon the meaning of existence (Bakewell). Considered precursors to the philosophers of existence, philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche and Søren Kierkegaard reflected upon existence. The post-World War II explorations of human existence followed Nietzsche's and Kierkegaard's and then Husserl's and Heidegger's interpretations of what it means to be human, living in the world.

Nietzsche and Kierkegaard were precursors for twentieth century philosophies of existence. Henry Blackham noted that both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard questioned purely rational Cartesian or idealistic Kantian approaches for explaining how humans exist within and understand the world. In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche sought to revive philosophy's attention to tragedy in life instead of its project of rationalism. As well in *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche argued that persons bearing strictly scientific interpretations of the world view the world as being primarily "mechanistic" and "essentially meaningless" (239). Nietzsche described modern people as moving mindlessly, following "herd instincts," and living without reflecting upon their own social mores (114). For Nietzsche, life bore a vital force. In knowing one's own inner processes, one comes to know oneself and realizes the force of one's own will to power.

Kierkegaard invited attending to one's own inner experience that involves affective as well as intellectual dimensions. His ideas emerged in his reflections on his own life (Wahl). Hegel proposed that reason could grasp the world as it is; yet, Kierkegaard suggested that Hegel's philosophy ignored existence (Blackham). In

Philosophical Fragments, Kierkegaard proposed returning to Socrates' attention to existence. Instead of seeking to understand universal truths about the world, one should attend to one's own individual existence. For Kierkegaard, a key category of existence was awareness that one stands before God (Wahl). From Kierkegaard's reflections, philosophers of existence attended to "existence in relation to transcendence" (Wahl 19). In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard described the Biblical narrative of Abraham's inner anguish felt as an individual alone before a choice to serve God or himself. Kierkegaard noted that one's emotions of fear or anxiety might keep one from choosing God as fears or anguish weighed one down from "mystical soaring" (52). Kierkegaard depicted a deep emotion or visceral experience, like Abraham's call to sacrifice his son Isaac, that shakes one out of mindless, distracted living and calls the subject to an authenticity in active self-awareness (Guignon and Pereboom; Wahl). In Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, the philosophical subject to be studied bears fears, faces choices, and becomes aware who is reflecting on his own existence.

Edmund Husserl, another precursor to existentialism, sounding in philosophy in the 1910s and 1920s, also turned attention from Cartesian mental thinking or Kantian mental categories to the one doing the thinking and categorizing. In *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl argued that an "I am" precedes a Cartesian "I doubt" (22). In this thinking subject, Husserl identified a transcendental ego constituting reality. This transcendental ego through intentional consciousness bestowed meaning upon the sensory experience (Husserl *Ideas* 226). According to Husserl, one's transcendental ego bestowed meaning on a phenomenon or the world (Macann). One begins by attending to the one thinking.

Philosophers of existence such as Gabriel Marcel in his *Metaphysical Journal* and Heidegger in *Being and Time* draw attention to one's existence. The study of one's existence involves a study of the one studying existence. Philosophers of existence share similar topics of study. In the study of existence one attends to the reflecting subject situated in the world, one's capacity to act, to live authenticity, and to bestow meaning upon the world.

Philosophers of existence also explored how this reflecting subject is situated in the world. Martin Heidegger extended Husserl's study by reflecting upon the meaning-bestower as a being-in-the-world. In this reflecting, Heidegger found *Dasein*, a being-there, as an experiencing being, who is aware of being thrown and existing in this world. For Heidegger, this reflecting being is present—or thrown into—particular circumstances. In light of Heidegger's ideas, according to Charles Guignon and Derk Pereboom, an existential approach to philosophy began with one's lived embedded experience. Marcel called this embedded experience "being in a situation" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 125). For Sartre, a person constitutes one's *own* situation through one's conscious and responsive interaction in the world. Philosophers offered differing descriptions of how a person is situated in the world.

Along with a power to bestow meaning, existential philosophers proposed that existing beings have a capacity to act. In facticity, the person is "bound up" within a particular historical setting (Heidegger 82). In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre contended that a person has power to transcend one's given existence and shape one's personal identity. Sartre described this power to transcend as an act of freedom, a reinterpretation of life. Sartre proposed that one is free to shape one's own identity through self-

awareness and decisions. As distinct from Sartre, Marcel viewed freedom as a gift given to the person from a divine Creator. For Marcel, freedom was not constructed by the individual, but gifted to the person.

Existentialists related the power to act freely with living authenticity. For example, Nietzsche stated one must, “become what you are” to be true to oneself (*The Gay Science* 189). Similarly, in *Man Against Mass Society*, Marcel suggested that a person who is alienated from self lacks “ingatheredness,” defined as the power to reflect upon one’s own inner world and actions (100). That person who cannot draw within himself for reflection also lacks the capacity to act in authenticity with his own inner beliefs (*Against Mass Society*). Sartre named the lack of awareness about *how* we are in the world, “bad faith” (*Being and Nothingness* 44). Existentialists called people to reflect upon their actions and to become conscious of how and why one is acting. Yet they differed in interpreting the meaning of freedom and of how one practices authenticity.

Human existence is connected to interpreting and bestowing meaning upon the world. Some existentialist philosophers looked to Heidegger’s interpreting being-in-the-world as a “being-towards-death” (Reinhardt). Etienne Gilson in *Existentialisme Chrétien* noted that some philosophers of existence, seeing no divine presence in the world, are identified as atheists, while other philosophers, like Marcel, are identified as religious, finding divine presence and meaning in experience.

Not all French philosophers in post-World War II France promoted the study of human existence or humanism. Marcel and Sartre offered ongoing reflections upon what it means to be human (Reinhardt). In distinction, their French contemporary, philosopher Louis Althusser described the study of humanism as a distraction for actually

understanding the world (Kelly et al.). Althusser suggested that one should study societal structures instead of human persons. Althusser attended to economic, political, and theoretical practices governed by a network of relations, as structures underlying social practices.

By the 1950s in France, popular conversations about philosophy turned to questions about structures and systems. Also questioning humanism's focus on man, French scholars Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jacques Lacan, and Michel Foucault called for studies of structures and systems shaping society (Hewitt). By the early 1950s, topics explored by philosophers of existence had begun to wane (Wright). According to Foucault in *The Order of Things*, man as both the subject studying and the subject of study had been usurped by more important investigations of conditions of discourses shaping society (Hewitt). Existentialist attentiveness to the human person ceded to philosophical reflections on societal dynamics.

Marcel in Dialogue *With*

The events and movements from late nineteenth-century through mid-twentieth century France construct the stage upon which Marcel developed and lived. Marcel's philosophy emerged in reflection upon and in response to his particular historical setting. As a philosopher of existence, Marcel started and joined conversations about meaning, the reflecting subject, being in a situation, and reflective action. His ideas sound in distinction from his colleagues Sartre or Heidegger. General movements emerging in his work weave his spiritual attentiveness together with his being *with* particular persons. Amid modern privileging of scientific studies, his voice might be muted. But his particular attentiveness to being in the world is welcomed in a postmodern milieu.

In Marcel's lifetime from 1889 to 1973, modern France experienced significant political, cultural, philosophical, and religious changes. During Marcel's lifetime, French people experienced the failures of modern technology and nation states to free humanity from strife and injustice. In fact, these states used technology to execute two world wars, the Holocaust, and atomic bombs. The postmodern questioning of modern promises sounded in artistic expressions of symbolism, cubism, and surrealism, communicated in this modern age. These changes were accompanied by scholars' shifting understanding about what it means to be a human who exists alongside other human beings.

Marcel, part existentialist and part Socratic, journeyed amid modern and postmodern terrain. Marcel did not offer a systematic philosophy but met particular persons in situation, in this world, with an interpretation. Marcel met these experiences of meaninglessness and homelessness and did not discount the metaphysical or spiritual presences. Marcel emerges in this milieu marked by both modern and postmodern commitments and conditions, a broken world marked by both fragmentation and openings.

General Movements Sounding in Marcel's Philosophy

Marcel's life and works happen amid historical moments marked by change. Marcel is situated within diverse philosophical and societal conversations. His reflections dialogue with persons, ideas, and events. As a being in a situation, Marcel was a being in and attentive to his world.

Throughout his life, Marcel reflected on his lived experience as blending spiritual, musical, dramatic, and philosophical insights. He studied and engaged philosophy through his academic studies, reading, conversations, and reflection. Marcel participated

in the philosophical conversations of his day, being shaped by and also voicing his own reflections in the dialogue. He described his overall approach to philosophy as being a “concrete approach” (*Metaphysical Journal* xiii). His concrete approach to philosophy involved thinking about particular aspects of life and then applying his ideas to actual experiences. Being forms a significant strand moving throughout his philosophy. This section addresses these general movements in his philosophical works. Marcel struggled with idealism for some of his career, attended to being throughout all of his work, assumed a concrete approach—even toward being, remained open to religious dimensions, and eluded a name for his philosophy.

His Struggles with Idealism. From the beginning of his philosophical reflections, Marcel noted his own inclination toward idealist thought⁸ and abstraction. Marcel’s work in the 1910s and 1920s includes some of his idealist interpretations of the world (*Awakenings*, *Metaphysical Journal*). As a philosophy student at the *Sorbonne*, Marcel studied Rene Descartes and German Idealists Immanuel Kant and Georg Hegel (Moran). Denis Moran noted that Marcel differentiated himself from aspects of Kant’s idealism. For example, Marcel felt that Kant privileged the mind and did not attend enough to lived experience (Moran). Marcel called for attending to body as a way of knowing the world.

Throughout his life, Marcel attended to abstract realities. He showed a skill for metaphysical and abstract thought (Cain). Cain argued that Marcel’s inclination to idealist thought stemmed from his view that a strictly empirical world is “brutish, chaotic and impure” (20). Marcel sought an ideal in a world beyond the empirically known (Cain).

⁸ Idealism in this context is addressed as the philosophical interpretation that “reality is somehow mind-correlative or mind-coordinated” (Rescher 412). The mind and thought constitute all that is. Similarly, philosopher Berkeley claimed “to be real is to be perceived” (qtd. in Rescher 412).

While a student at the *Sorbonne*, he also read American Idealists William Ernest Hocking and Josiah Royce. David Rodick contended that Marcel's reading of Royce and Hocking shaped Marcel's blended idealist-pragmatic approach. Royce proposed approaching philosophical problems about divine Being by reflecting on one's own inner experience (Caponigri). As Marcel read Hocking's and Royce's works, he also adopted their focus on intersubjectivity (*Awakenings* 72). Both Hocking and Royce had attempted to reconcile interpersonal relationships within an idealist approach (Moran). In his 1918 reflections on *Royce's Metaphysics*, Marcel signaled his distancing from idealism and his growing attentiveness to inner experience (Rodick). While permitting idealist concepts, Marcel continued to turn his reflection to experience that includes thought *and* existence.

His Attention to Being. Marcel's experience and interpretation of the world was permeated by his attention to *being*. His philosophy began by asking himself, "Who am I—I who question being?" ("Ontological Mystery" 16). Marcel acknowledged "that the whole reflexive process remains within a certain assertion which I *am*—rather than *which I pronounce*—an assertion of which I am the place, and not the subject" (*Being and Having* 171). For Marcel, existence precedes reflection: one *is* before one *thinks*. He considered who *is* doing the thinking. His body forms a "datum for my consciousness" (18). One experiences the world through one's concrete, placed body.

Being's intimate connection to thinking prevents one from standing apart from being in order to define it. In his notes from 1912-1913, Marcel suggested that "being is neither substance nor representation. It can only be conceived as that in which thought participates" (*Philosophical Fragments* 84). Being holds intrinsic significance that "withstands—what would withstand—an exhaustive analysis bearing on the data of

experience and aiming to reduce them step by step to elements increasingly devoid of intrinsic or significant value” (“Ontological Mystery” 14). In this sense being, as the possibility of experiencing inexhaustible phenomena, is engaged by and over-abounds a person’s thinking or description. One participates in being and cannot fully comprehend what being means. Being eludes definitive description, and yet, being is real.

Marcellian scholar Thomas Anderson suggested that Marcel offered overarching interpretations of being throughout his philosophical works. Marcel defined being as “the foundation grounding every particular being and all experience” (Anderson 30). Being is experienced as existing in and as one’s body. As well, Marcel proposed being was experienced as a “fulfillment” of one’s desires for transcendence (Anderson 45). In this sense, Marcel interpreted being as a *telos*, a moment of future fulfillment of one’s desires. Marcel saw being as ground for experience and a signal of eternal realms beyond natural present experience.

Marcel studied being by blending intuition with uncertainty. Marcel rejected philosophies like Hegel’s dialectic that approached reflection with a “fundamental certainty” that one would discover something (*Metaphysical* viii). He also eschewed empiricism that excluded the possibility of bringing any bias to the reflection (viii). In his 1950 reflection, Marcel argued that one bears a “presentiment or forefeeling of something regarding which we can say, ‘This is reality’” (viii). This presentiment is not an objective assurance but rather a sense about being. One could never encounter being as an objective definable entity; being “can only be alluded to” (viii). Bearing a presentiment about what being is, one encounters being and one approaches a description of this encounter.

Marcel's philosophy allows for an intuition about being. Although he promoted a concrete approach to reflection, he contended that all thinking starts from an "inaccessible" source (*Metaphysical Journal* x). One's "blind intuition," "'forefeeling' or premonition" forms one's ground for reflection on existence (x). Before one reflects upon existence, one starts out from somewhere, some ground. Marcel named being as the starting ground for his examination of human existence.

Marcel's use of the terms ontology and metaphysics stand in distinction from traditional Western interpretations of these terms. Dwayne Tunstall argued that Marcel's meaning of ontology did not mean categorization of beings, but rather his ontology reflected on "the meaningfulness of those phenomena that enable us to participate in being" (6). Tunstall called Marcel's ontology a "phenomenological ontology" (6). Tunstall suggested that Marcel studied being not as a finite "spatiotemporal thing" but as "the condition for the possibility of the meaningful existence of finite beings" (8). This distinction means that Marcel described but did not definitively categorize beings. Thus, Tunstall proposed that Marcellian philosophy sought *not* to extract definitions of being but to interpret the meaning of persons who are beings in a situation (13). As well, Marcel's metaphysics did not imply a dogmatic categorization of being (Tunstall 17). Tunstall contended that Marcel offered his particular interpretation of "being-in-the-world" (17). Marcel's metaphysics did not promote objective definitions of being but offered Marcel's evaluations of being (Tunstall 18).

His Concrete Approach. Marcel's experience in World War I marked his turn to reflection upon one's lived experience. Before World War I, his philosophy had tended toward an idealist view of the world (*Awakenings*). His experience in World War I,

working in the office of missing persons, sharpened Marcel's attentiveness to one's concrete experience (*Awakenings*). Edwin Straus and Michael Machado connected Marcel's experience in this war office to his turn from an *idea* of existence to a *lived* drama of existence (124). In contact with suffering people, Marcel desired to reflect on lived, concrete experiences. After the war, he turned his philosophical reflections to concrete experiences.

Marcel's method—if he could be described as having a method of philosophy—is frequently described as “a concrete approach” to describe his “mediations on the mystery of being” (*Metaphysical* viii). This meant that he began his reflections from descriptions of “life as it is concretely lived” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 4). His concrete approach involved “working my way up from life to thought and then down from thought to life again, so that I may try to throw more light upon life” (41). After describing “a given concrete situation,” Marcel reflected upon what the situation might imply in terms of being (37). Marcel's concrete approach attended to actual events and situations.

Marcel would glean his interpretations by moving from concrete situations to ideas. While reflecting upon abstract realities, Marcel continually grounded his discussion in actual examples (Treanor 55). His attention to concrete situations includes attending to the presence of beings. While attending to one's experience of being with strangers on a train, Marcel noted that sometimes one acknowledges the other person as a being worthy of being addressed as a *thou* and at other times one ignores the presence of the other person (*Metaphysical* 146). As he reflected upon particular experiences, Marcel sought categories common to human experience (Zaner). Marcel did not seek universals but categories of experience.

His Opening to Religious Dimensions. Marcel explored themes including the experience of faith or supernatural realities, he was, and is, sometimes dismissed as addressing “extraphilosophical subjects” such as theology or theological metaphysics (Tunstall 12). Yet Marcel’s descriptions of human experience were not meant to prove theological realities. His early writing, *Metaphysical Journal* and “Existence and Objectivity” were written before 1929 when he had not yet professed religious belief. He explored his own experiences that he interpreted as encounters with realities.

Marcel sought a philosophy that aptly described his actual experience of the world. He described experiences of loss due to death of a loved one and feelings of deep fulfillment in love. He encountered mystery present in these experiences of loss and love (*Creative Fidelity*). As a young scholar in 1916, Marcel already took issue with strictly empirical interpretations of reality that did not allow for the possibility of spiritual phenomena to be real (*Metaphysical Journal*). Dialogues in his plays included references to inexplicable phenomena or beyond-material realities (Hanley). Marcel saw that at the root of human experience rested “[one’s] exigencies” (*Tragic Wisdom* 34). Some of these exigencies were “ontological,” felt as dissatisfaction with purely material dimensions of life (“Ontological Mystery”). Marcel, in contemplating his own experience, felt longings for a world beyond the material dimension were real and valid.

At an international congress on philosophy in 1946, Sartre called Marcel a “Christian existentialist”⁹ (“Existentialism is a Humanism” 36). Thereafter, Marcel was frequently juxtaposed alongside Sartre’s atheistic existentialism (*Awakenings* 192).

Marcel was also identified as a Christian existentialist in Etienne Gilson’s *Existentialisme*

⁹ At a conference in 1948, a participant noted that Marcel reacted to the name existentialist, claiming the name did not account for his own belief in hope, and as a name had been “debased through constant misuse” (Bollnow 179-80).

Chrétien: Gabriel Marcel (1947). Marcel regretted that he agreed to be included in Gilson's work (Bollnow 179). He felt the whole of his philosophy was reduced to, and sometimes dismissed for, being a *Christian* philosophy. Marcel suggested his philosophy was better described as *human* (*Awakenings*). Tunstall argued that Marcel's philosophy is, in fact, philosophical because Marcel "described the human existence faithfully and adequately" (13). Avoiding reducing Marcel's reflections to Christian philosophy, this dissertation attends to his philosophy as reflections upon human experience.

Eluding a Name for His Approach. Scholars have attempted to identify Marcel's philosophy or system, but Marcel himself did not regard his philosophy as an organized study nor as offering a philosophical method. Paul Schilpp and Lewis Hahn in *The Philosophy of Marcel* explained that Marcel has been identified as existentialist, Christian existentialist, phenomenologist, Catholic philosopher, idealist, and personalist. Marcel resisted being named or categorized. Avoiding the name philosophical system, Marcel saw his own philosophical explorations as *recherché*, "a search for, or an investigation into" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 1). Thus, his philosophical reflections meander through spiritual, dramatic, and philosophical realms in unsystematic ways.

Resisting association with a philosophical system, Marcel loosely associated his work with a Socratic philosophical approach. In his preface to the reprint of *Metaphysical Journal*, dated 1950, Marcel suggested that the *least* problematic description for his position in philosophy would be "a kind of neo-Socratism" (xiii). Marcellian scholars interpreted diversely his neo-Socratism to describe his informal approach to dialoguing about the meaning of being (Schmitz), to indicate his use of dialogue in philosophical

investigation (McCown), or to uncover uncertainties present in human reasoning or philosophy as a journey (Treanor).

Most Marcellian scholars interpreted Marcel's neo-Socratism to mean a blending of phenomenological and existential approaches to being and relationships. Pietro Prini viewed Marcel's neo-Socratism as questioning object of reflection "what is it [object] really?" in a "phenomenological explication of some practical and theoretical structures of experience, where the participatory essence of being reveals its implication in an absolute relationship" (231). As well, Treanor suggested that Marcel's neo-Socratism includes "parts phenomenological, existential, and empirical" (56). Marcel's self-description as neo-Socratic revealed his attending to the person-subject philosopher and his commitment to dialogue to understanding of the world. After conceding this "least problematic" naming, Marcel consistently returned throughout his remaining years to offer his own self-description: his philosophical reflections always engaged a concrete approach.

As Marcel wrote and spoke within a Western European twentieth century milieu, he shared a stage with philosophers taking phenomenological, analytic, and existential approaches to the world. Marcel engaged with philosophies of existence, American idealist, personalist, humanist, and Christian perspectives on the human person in relation to that person's world (Gallagher; Moran; Schilpp and Hahn). Marcel participated in various interpretive journeys through diverse idealist and existential approaches.

Marcel's philosophical history includes his recursive reflections about certain themes. He returns again and again to the meaning and experience of being. He changes his philosophical approach to his reflections, moving from idealism to a study of

existence while also maintaining his openness to spiritual realms within philosophy. The themes sound as movements throughout Marcel's works sounding in similar or slightly different expressions throughout the years. As *homo viator* and philosopher, Marcel described himself as a traveller passing open to experiences, and pausing to share his reflections in drama and discussion.

Summary

This chapter situated Gabriel Marcel in the historical period from late nineteenth-century through mid-twentieth century France by describing macro-level features of significant events in France and through exploring several important events in Marcel's life. The macro-level analysis attended to time periods within modern France as significant descriptions of the broken world within which Marcel lived and wrote. Within the third time period covering post World War II, a description of philosophies of existence offers important discussions shaping Marcel's philosophy. Then, a summary of Marcel's experiences revealed his attentiveness to being and his concrete approach to philosophy.

Marcel's reflections on being in the world broken by technology announce a dialogic way of being in this world. The following chapters explore Marcel's philosophy as dialogic praxes in a world broken by technology. The second chapter analyzes Marcel's philosophy of the body as a constitutional and vital positioning in the world. The third chapter describes Marcel's reflection as a response in the broken world. The fourth chapter delineates Marcel's concepts of intersubjectivity as dialogic praxes for being with others in the world. The fifth chapter summarizes Marcel's philosophy of technics that attends to interactions between persons and technology. The sixth chapter

concludes the dissertation by examining how Marcel's philosophy offers dialogic praxes for being in my body, attending to being, and being *with* others as a response to the world broken by technology.

CHAPTER TWO

Gabriel Marcel's Embodied Approach to Existence: Positioning for Dialogue

Gabriel Marcel as a being in situation, participated in societal and philosophical discussions in early 1900s France. Marcel's attention to existence began as attention to being body in the world. In *The Problem of Embodiment*, Richard Zaner proposed the body formed "the matrix of Gabriel Marcel's philosophical work" (3). In asking the question: How do I relate to the world? Marcel first turned to the body for possible explanations. He claimed, "between me and all that exists there is a relation (the word is quite inadequate) of the same type that unites me to my body" (*Metaphysical Journal* 274). One's relation to the world begins in one's body, which provides both ground and medium for one's relation to the world.

Marcel's discussions of embodiment began in 1914 in his *Metaphysical Journal*. His ideas vary across his writings as he matured in his work. He shared a stage with philosophers who approach the world from phenomenological, analytic, and existential orientations. Although Piero Prini, Dwayne Tunstall, and Paul Ricœur acknowledge that Marcel sometimes adopted a phenomenological method, Marcel did not use that label. He also did not identify as existentialist. Zaner suggested that Marcel's study of the embodiment be considered as a "strictly philosophical endeavor" (46). Marcel contributed foundational insights about the body as animate organism.

Marcel's philosophy began by asking himself, "Who am I—I who question being?" ("Ontological Mystery" 16). Aware *that* he existed, Marcel wondered if there was "any touchstone of existence" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 88). He sought "an existential

indubitable”¹⁰ (88). Marcel examined his own experience, thoughts, and feelings of existence. In this examination, Marcel found himself “in the presence here of a key datum, rather a datum on which everything else hinges . . . I mean *my* body” (91-92). Marcel called this experience of being in the presence of my body incarnate being.¹¹ He claimed, “one’s body is not merely an instrument, it presents us with a kind of reality which is quite different from reality of apparatus, in so far as it, my body, is also my way of being in the world” (209). “My body” is a condition for my existence. Marcel described one’s exact relation to one’s body as an elusive concept. One’s relation to one’s body is “opaque” (*Being and Having* 11). The opaque concept of one’s own body “is thought of, but it is never resolved” (11). One’s relation as body in the world involves uncertainty and mystery. To respond to his question, “Who am I?” Marcel explored how one is in the world by relating in, with, *and* through one’s body.

Marcel understands embodiment as the way one is in, with, and through one’s body in the world. The first section describes Marcel’s approach to the study of embodied existence. The second section offers Marcel’s understanding of incarnate being as being bound to my body. The third section summarizes his exploration of how one is a being who feels. The fourth section Marcel’s distinctions between being and having in one’s relations in, with, and through one’s own body. The fifth section explicates Marcel’s characterization of the self who experiences body and situation. Finally, the last section

¹⁰ Zaner translated Marcel’s “*indubitable existentiel*” as “existential landmark” (8). This project also uses touchstone.

¹¹ Zaner maintained Marcel’s French phrase “être-incarnée.” G.S. Fraser translated the phrase to “incarnate being” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 40). Katherine Farrar in *Being and Having* used the word “incarnation” in translating Marcel’s description of an experience (11). Some scholars describe elements of Marcel’s concept as “incarnation” (Straus and Machado 123). When describing the person, I will use “incarnate being” and when describing the situation, I will use “incarnation.”

offers initial reflections on how Marcel's philosophy of embodiment positions one for dialogue.

Embodied Existence

Marcel proposed understanding how one relates to the world by studying how one relates in, with, and through one's body. Marcel promoted a philosophical turn from solely studying the mind to attending also to the vital experience of one's own existence. He joined Western philosophers in scrutinizing experience to ascertain touchstones of experience. This section reflects on Marcel's turn from idealism to his experience of existence as an exclamation and as always in body.

Marcel Turns from Idealism to Attend to the Body

Marcel promoted a philosophical turn from solely studying the mind to attending also to the vital experience of embodiment. While Marcel's reflections initially tended toward an idealist view of the world, his philosophical writings published in 1927 revealed his distancing himself from idealism (Collins). In his writings beginning in 1914 and continuing throughout his life, he identified in idealist philosophies an "over-simplification . . . of the relationships that bind me to myself" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 87). According to Gallagher, Marcel distanced himself from Descartes because Descartes mistakenly claimed the *cogito*, "a thinking being and universal subject," was the sole know-er of the world (15). According to Marcel, Kant rendered the mind the sole constructor of knowledge. Idealist philosophers minimize existence's role in describing reality (*Metaphysical Journal* 319). Idealists focused on dimensions of phenomena that a "subject" might ascertain for an objective definition (*Metaphysical Journal* 319). Idealism thus did not account for *how* the object being studied "is present to or affects the

person considering it” (De Lacoste 70). According to Marcel, idealism overlooks how the object presents itself to the subject through experience (De Lacoste 70). Straus and Machado also noted that idealists do not study one’s “immediate experience” (124).

Marcel saw idealist philosophers studying the thinking subject who extended approval or disapproval upon the world of objects. Marcel argued that this “solipsistic type of idealism would never be able to grasp the fact of my existence” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 106). Marcel saw idealism dismissing the role of the body that also shapes how one experiences the world (Moran 24). Marcel called for attending to body as a way of knowing the world. Thus, he began his study of relations-in-the-world by attending to one’s own existence.

Existence could also be known or experienced through faculties other than reason. One becomes aware of the “fact of existence” not just through mental reasoning but also through feelings about one’s own existence (*Metaphysical* 40, 45). Marcel asserted that a distinction between one’s “intellectual and vital” experience does not exist (“Ontological Mystery” 17). One experiences the world as conjoined mental and bodily experience. Marcel attended to body so as to understand relations between experience, existence, self, and the world.

Marcel’s Word for Feeling

Marcel used the word *sentir*¹² to describe how one feels one’s own body and how one feels through one’s body. He qualified different ways that one feels. He uses the word *sentir* to describe how one experience’s one’s body-as-mine. As times he used the word *sentir* interchangeably with sensuous perception. Marcel sometimes interchanged

¹² When describing feeling, Marcel does not use the French words “*toucher*”(to touch) nor “*tâter*” (to feel) (Zaner 35).

“sensations” and feeling as he discusses one’s perception and affective attitude toward the world (*Mystery of Being* 1: 104). However, his reflections about the body do not include a thorough explanation of sensuous perception (Zaner). Marcel focused on how one feels in and through one’s body. This project will use the word *feeling* for Marcel’s *sentir*.

Existence Experienced as “Here I Am!”

One bears a feeling about existence. Marcel describes one’s reflection on existence as an exclamation. Marcel turned to his own experience of existence to understand relations between self, body, and existence. In his reflection, Marcel derived a foundational certainty: I exist. He called this certainty, “an existential immediate . . . of something I am” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 111). He was not addressing “thought-content” but rather an “exclamatory awareness of existence” (111). Marcel described one’s feeling that bursts forth to acknowledge existence as an “act of salutation” or “act of admiration” (Straus and Machado 133). For example, when one narrowly misses death or when one sees a newborn child, one feels one’s existence in a heightened way (Straus and Machado). This existential immediate—that I exist—is felt as an admiration that one exists in the world.

One’s exclamation about existence sounds in response to one’s own existence. Marcel likened this exclamation to “a small child who comes up to us with shining eyes and who seems to be saying: ‘Here I am! What luck!’” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 90). He further explained that in the cry “Here I am,” the “I exist” means that I am “manifest” (91). The word exist bears the “Latin prefix *ex*—meaning *out, outwards, out from*—in ‘exist’ (91). One’s existence involves one manifesting outward toward the world. Marcel,

like other existential philosophers, began his study of experience by wondering at the fact *that* “I exist.”

Existence is Always in Body

Beginning his reflection on the question, “Who am I?” Marcel began with his own body as a locus for all experience. Marcel addressed the question “Who am I?” by attending to “here” and “now” implicated in the act of questioning (*Mystery of Being* 1: 109). “Here” and “now” refer to a “loci and moment” of what Marcel described as “immediate experience” (109). Marcel also called “hereness and nowness” of an existing person his “ecceity” (175). To know one’s immediate experience, one must begin by describing one’s experience of the here and now.

From his first reflections in *The Metaphysical Journal* (1914) or *Being and Having: An Existentialist Diary* (1935), Marcel associated one’s existence to the body, explaining, “When I affirm that something exists, I always mean that I consider that something as connected with my body, as able to be put in contact with it, however indirect this contact may be” (*Being* 10). The body offers a point of contact for all relations. One relates to all things “as connected with my body.” Therefore, existence is known by way of the body. Marcel argued that “in connection with [my body] . . . every existing thing is defined and placed” (*Being and Having* 10). Through the body, one connects to and relates to “every existing thing” (10). The human body designates a person’s place in time, space, and among other persons (Straus and Machado). Thus, Marcel claimed that the body held a privileged “metaphysical status” for one’s relation to the world (*Being and Having* 11). One’s here and now are felt primarily in one’s body.

Marcel turns to his own existence to understand how one relates to the world. To exist means to be in body. To be in body means to be in *this* body that is also *my* body. Marcel called this experience incarnate being.

Incarnate Being: Being Bound to My Body

For Marcel, philosophy should begin by ascertaining one's situation in the world as a relation in, with, and through one's body. He named this situation "incarnation," stating "incarnation is the situation of a being who appears to himself to be, as it were, *bound* to a body" (*Being* 11). Marcel contended "to be incarnated is to appear to oneself as body, as this particular body, without being identified with it nor distinguished from it" (*Creative Fidelity* 20). One experiences the world as incarnate being.

A key dimension of incarnation is relating to body as *my* body. In exploring how one relates to the world, Marcel sought to "get directly to grips with that non-transparent datum which is constituted by my body, felt as *my* body" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 93). One's body as temporally and spatially placed constitutes datum that is always experienced as one's own. Body is always experienced as one's own. One experiences "my body in so far as it is *my* body" (92). Experiencing incarnate being, for Marcel, meant to sense one's body as "my body" (*Creative Fidelity* 20). He used the word "corporeity" to describe this experience (*Being and Having* 82). Corporeity means that one can only think of "a body" as "the body of" someone (*Being and Having* 82). A body is always the body of someone. Body is always bound to a person.

Because I experience *my* body, I can acknowledge *that* I exist (*Mystery of Being* 1: 109). That one exists in *this* body constitutes a "touchstone of existence" (109). One becomes certain that "I exist" as a result of experiencing that one is in body (110). If one

exists, one experiences the world in and through one's own body. In this section, I clarify Marcel's distinctions between body-subject and body-object relations, then describe incarnate being as one's fundamental situation and ground for existence, and summarize Marcel's approach to thinking about my body.

Body-Subject and Body-Object

Building upon his claim that one relates to one's body as mine, Marcel explored how one interacts with one's body as object or as subject.¹³ According to Marcel, one can relate to the body as body-object and as body-subject.¹⁴ He described this interaction between the person and his body as "some kind of relationship which resists being made wholly objective in my mind" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 101). He clarified that words do not fully describe this relation (101). Although one feels one's body as "mine," one does not strictly relate to one's body as object (100). The section on having and being will address Marcel's understanding of "mine." Because one's body is not fully identified with "me," one's body is experienced as an object (100). As well, the body is in some way an object, in the way that the body is in the world as an object that can be observed by others (Gallagher 17). One experiences one's body as object and as subject.

One engages one's body as subject when one expresses that "my body is mine, I do not place any interval between it and me, or rather for as much as it is not an *object* for me, but in so far as I *am* my body" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 100). The "I" who experiences "my body" is body-subject. For Marcel, experiencing the body-as-mine is an experience of body-subject. He described "the situation of a being who appears to himself as fundamentally and not accidentally connected to *his* body" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 101).

¹³ Later in 1940, Marcel suggested that these distinctions between body-subject and body-object were problematic for describing actual experiences (*Creative Fidelity* 26).

¹⁴ Zaner maintains Marcel's phrases "*corps sujet*" and "*corps objet*" (34).

One is intimately and existentially connected to his body as his. In embodiment, I become aware of my body as mine.

Incarnate Being is One's Fundamental Situation

Although incarnation constitutes one's fundamental situation in the world, one's experience of incarnation was partially inexplicable. Marcel described given as a "fundamental situation which cannot strictly speaking be disposed of, surmounted or analyzed" (qtd. in *Creative Fidelity* 65). A given is a fundamental component of one's experience (Vinci). For Marcel, a being appears to himself as being *bound* to his body. One's being-in-the-world is a given. One finds oneself always already in one's body. For Marcel, incarnation meant:

This given is opaque to itself, in opposition to the *cogito*. Of this body, I can neither say that it is I, nor that it is not I, nor that it is *for* me (like an object). The opposition of subject and object is found to be transcended from the start. (*Being and Having* 11- 12)

As an opaque phenomena,¹⁵ one's mind cannot apprehend this experience of incarnation. One's incapacity to say either "it is I" or "it is not I" indicates a problematic relation of one to one's own body. Incarnation as a given may not be analyzed by the reflecting mind but is experienced in a way that eludes mental conceptual analysis. Zaner describes Marcel's description of incarnate being "the mystery of *embodiment*, my *être-incarnée*"¹⁶ (11). Incarnate being as mystery reveals concepts that elude analytical definitions.

One cannot grasp the concept of incarnate being with mental clarity. The concept of incarnation is an "opaque" phenomena (*Being and Having* 11). The world itself also

¹⁵ A later discussion in this project addresses opaque phenomena as mysteries.

¹⁶ Other scholars have translated the term as incarnate being (Straus and Machado).

appears as an opaque “insoluble” reality (*Being and Having* 11ff). The metaphor may be understood through another lens of experience: one’s body. Marcel approached his study of being as a study of *incarnate* being. Thomas W. Busch suggested that Marcel—countering Descartes’ primary approach to the world through the mind—called attention to the body as a way to know the world (6). In privileging the body for understanding one’s relation to the world, Marcel moved from Descartes’ *cogito* to a participating embodied thinker who was both subject and object in the reflection (Busch). In his transcending the subject/object opposition, Marcel studied being-in-the-world as beginning in body-as-situation. He understood a person as situated in existence, a “being-in-situation,” and this situation involved the body.

Incarnate Being is Ground for Existence

For Marcel, incarnation was the ground for and of existence. He used the metaphor of incarnation to examine and understand existence. He viewed incarnation as an indubitable existent, such that “if I were to deny it, any assertion by me that anything else existed would become quite inconceivable” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 109). Incarnation, a relation of being bound to body, shapes all situations (Gillian 501). Marcel stated “incarnation is the datum with respect to which a fact becomes possible” (*Creative Fidelity* 65). In this sense, incarnation is facticity (Gillian 501). Incarnation cannot be described by concepts but forms a ground for reflection. Gillian argued that this metaphor of incarnation gives the reflecting subject his own existence, his ground from which to reflect on existence. Gillian also claimed that incarnation undergirds all facts and ways of being in the world (501). In using incarnation to examine existence, Marcel discovered that incarnation itself is “the central ‘given’ of metaphysic” (*Being and Having* 11). In

asking what could be certain in existence, Marcel found one's relation to one's body at the heart of one's situation.

Marcel also contended that incarnation aids a person in understanding certain dimensions of life. Certain phenomena, like existence, can never be fully understood through mental cognition, because conceptually one cannot grasp the entire realm of a mystery (*Being and Having*). Phenomena such as existence or body-as-mine may be understood through one's incarnate experience (10). An incarnate experience provides a way of grasping or understanding mystery. As well, this experience of incarnation forms the ground upon which one encounters and relates to the world.

Marcel began his philosophical reflections by attending to person-in-situation, and this situation involves being bound to one's body. He saw in this situation the ground underlying existence itself—the ground of incarnation. Incarnation is a relation of being bound to one's own body. Marcel explored this relation between being and bound to body as felt both immediately and in a mediated way through feelings and sensations.

Thinking about My Body

Marcel studied the existing, thinking perceiver relating to objects outside the mind. He described one's relation to an object as “An object is constructed, that is to say—and by definition—as independent of the perceiving subject” (*Metaphysical Journal* 14). This construction happens “co-extensively” with experience (14). Marcel described the existence of objects is “given in an immediate relation to a consciousness” (17).

He addressed how one's consciousness is related to one's body. Consciousness exists “only in the measure in which it is given in an immediate relation to itself or to

another” (18). The “datum” of consciousness is “*my body*” (*Metaphysical Journal* 18). For Marcel, consciousness exists in relation to *my body*. According to Marcel, consciousness relates to my body through “two absolutely distinct modes of existence” (19). One mode involves “my body is given to me as a datum in space by means of my sensuous perception of it” (Zaner 12). The other mode is “my body is a datum given to internal perception (*coenesthésique*) ” (*Metaphysical Journal* 19). The first mode involves the body perceived as being in space: one is conscious of one’s being in physical space, one is aware of one’s physical arms and legs. One is aware that one is here and now being in *this* body. The second mode is one’s coenesthetic perception: one’s perceptions of the bodily needs, I feel that I am hungry. One perceives one’s body through internal perception. For Marcel, being aware of one’s body involves sensuous and internal perception. One is conscious of one’s body and one feels one’s body in particular ways as body-subject and body-object.

One’s experiences the world as incarnate being—I appear to myself as this particular body and I am always in the world bound to my body. One is aware of one’s existence through feeling one’s body as one’s own and through feeling experiences in, with, and through one’s body. As Marcel uses the word “feel” to describe one’s experience as incarnate being, the next section addresses what Marcel means by a being who *feels*.

I am a Being Who Feels

One’s embodiment or situation of being connected to one’s body is connected to feelings. Marcel continued his discussion of body-subject, “I am my body only in so far as I am a being that has feelings” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 101). Marcel described one’s

relation of incarnation to “my body” as being experienced as a *feeling* of the body as one’s own. Marcel’s describes feeling in this particular experience According to Straus and Machado, for Marcel feelings were the “primordial” or “basic modality of human embodiment” (128, 130). Feelings are felt before cognitive awareness of the feeling is formed. This section explores Marcel’s description of how one becomes aware of feelings, what it means to “feel” my body as mine, and how feelings may be actions.

Awareness of Feelings

One becomes aware of feelings felt in one’s body through forming an idea about a feeling. Straus and Machado claimed that Marcel’s discussions of feelings and sensation was rooted in the work of Hocking, an American idealist philosopher. For Hocking, feelings could be known cognitively. Hocking argued that feelings are felt first as a bodily state. As one becomes aware of a feeling, one forms an idea of that feeling. Feeling is “idea-apart-from-its-object tending to become idea-in-presence-of-its-object” (Hocking 68). Marcel used language similar to Hocking’s to describe sensations and feelings (Straus and Machado). For example, Marcel differentiated one’s “submerged” feelings from one’s “emerging” feelings (*Mystery of Being* 1: 114). Submerged feelings are those emotions that have not yet been reflected upon nor directly addressed by thought. Emerging sensations are mentally recognized as feelings. For example, one feels an appreciative connection with one’s body as one’s own as a submerged feeling felt in a pre-reflective—albeit real—way. Yet, when one uses further reflection to name one’s sense of “my body is felt as *my* body,” one is engaging an emerging feeling.

Feeling My Body as Mine

Although in some phrases, Marcel states, “I am my body,” (*Metaphysical* 243) he clarifies in his 1950 text that one’s relation to one’s body happens as a connection and in a body-subject relation. His latter text states “the situation of a being who appears to himself as fundamentally and not accidentally connected to *his* body” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 101). One is connected to one’s own body and feels one’s body in a particular way. Marcel described this feeling of one’s self as body-subject as one’s own sympathetic mediation (101). In sympathetic mediation, one is in “non-instrumental communion” with one’s body (101). One feels one’s own body as a unity: I am my body. Twenty-five years earlier, in *Metaphysical Journal*, Marcel described “sympathetic mediation”¹⁷ as meaning that one feels some feeling or experience without a conscious acknowledgment of one’s feeling (246). In the earlier reflection, Marcel suggested that one experienced certain feelings strictly through the body without becoming aware of the feeling.

Marcel argued that certain feelings about existence were experienced at a foundational or deeply internal level. He argued that there were some “fundamental sensations” that he also called “*Urgefühl* or primordial feeling” (*Metaphysical* 247; Straus and Machado). These feelings were felt as an “*a priori* of pure sensibility” or felt pre-reflectively (*Metaphysical* 247ff). One primordial feeling was feeling one’s body as “intimately mine” (*Metaphysical* 247). This feeling appeared to the person through modes of feeling one’s body from within. Marcel stated “between consciousness and body there is another relation inasmuch as my body is a datum given to internal

¹⁷ Although Marcel initially used this term “sympathetic mediation” to describe how one feels one’s body as mine, he later suggested that this phrase proved inadequate for depicting one’s relating one’s body through feelings. He suggested that the word mediation introduced an apparent, but unreal, between in one’s relation to one’s body (*Mystery of Being* 1: 102).

perception” (*Metaphysical* 19). One could “coenesthetically” perceive one’s bodily sensations (19). Feelings of coenesthesia included experiences like “being tired, hungry, energetic” (Straus and Machado 130). In feelings of being tired, one feels tiredness in and through one’s body. David Appelbaum suggested that Marcel’s coenesthetic feeling meant that one perceives one’s own body through body-consciousness (47). Thus coenesthesia is a form of “ontological perception” or perception about the real, felt at a pre-reflective level (Appelbaum 47). One’s body is felt as mine through primordial feelings or ontological perceptions.

One experiences one’s body in a fundamental way through a primordial feeling. Marcel described this relation through primordial feelings a “non-instrumental¹⁸ communion” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 101). One’s feeling about one’s body is experienced as an unmediated encounter, a communion. One’s feeling about one’s own body as my body is felt as an experience “incapable of mediation” (“Existence and Objectivity” 329). Marcel contended that this feeling, a ‘non-mediatizable immediate’ constitutes *how* one relates to the world through primordial feelings (*Mystery of Being* 1: 109). I do not feel my body in a mediated way; I do not receive this feeling passively. I participate in my feelings. According to Marcel, feelings also functioned as actions.

Feelings as Actions

One senses the world in, with, and through one’s body. Marcel stated that “the body being at one and the same time [is] what feels and what is felt” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 102). One’s body feels in active and receptive ways. In feeling one participates, “to feel is to be affected in a given manner” (*Metaphysical Journal* 187). Marcel noted that some

¹⁸ Scholars suggest that Marcel’s discussions of body as mediator or as instrument change over his years of writing (Straus and Machado). Zaner noted that Marcel’s descriptions of the body as instrument or mediator are problematic.

people used the term sensation to indicate one's reception of the transmitted message or signal (*Creative Fidelity* 37). Marcel clarified that sensations and feelings were *not* transmitted messages. One engaged feelings and sensations actively. Through sensations, a person "participates" as a "subject in a surrounding world from which no veritable frontier separates it" (*Existence* 331). One senses the world through participation in the world in which no frontier separates the feeling subject from the world around her. Feelings and sensations are an act of participation in the world.

Marcel viewed feelings and sensations as taking active and participatory roles in shaping one's being in the world (*Mystery of Being* 1: 102). For Marcel, feelings could be receptive but also could include an "active element . . . of opening oneself to" or of welcoming (*Creative Fidelity* 29; *Mystery of Being* 1: 118). Through feelings of "responsiveness" one could be positioned-in-body as open to other persons. Marcel connects attitudes of openness toward other persons with an internal decision to feel for other persons. One who feels toward the other person positions as open for the other. He described a person who lacked a receptive feeling toward others as feeling "apathy" (119). Feeling toward the other, in an active sense, might also be experienced through participation. Marcel differentiated feelings experienced by a spectator with feelings experienced by a participant (122). He described a theatrical spectator who might feel anxiety while watching the play but then "leaves the theater peacefully...brushed away [by] whatever emotions the work may have aroused in him" (121). A spectator simulates participating and has "emotions which are superficially similar to those of people who are really committed to some course of action" (122). Feeling actively may involve sharing in or participating in another's feelings or remaining as a spectator at a distance. Thus, for

Marcel, feelings took on a significant role in shaping *how* one is and participates in the world.

Marcel had sought for descriptions of the word *sentir*. One's primordial feeling of one's body as mine reveals that to *be* means to *be* as an incarnate being. Awareness of one's body-as-mine is what Marcel might call a given, a constitutive component of existence. Marcel described the having of one's body or feeling that body is *my* body constitutes a "unity *sui generis*," or an irreducible concept felt as given reality (*Mystery of Being* 1: 98). He proposed that this primordial feeling that my body is mine constituted a way one *is* in the world in, with, and through one's particular body.

Feelings constitute a primordial engagement of human embodiment, where ideas about, awareness of, and participation in feelings shape ways in which one is in the world and ways in which one experiences one's own body. Marcel did not allocate to intelligence alone an active role in experience, but, rather, he suggested that feeling bore an active role in shaping experience (*Mystery of Being* 1:103). Feeling one's body as *my* body also reveals body as a capacity for action. One might also engage feelings in active or passive ways, as participant or spectator. One's feelings reveal a site for choice. One may or may not use one's feelings to feel with others. Feelings reveal characteristics for relationships to others. One's relation to one's own body also uncovers pathways for relationships with others. The next section explores how one relates to one's own body through being and/or having one's body reveals common ways for relating to others.

Being and Having: My Relations in, with, and through My Own Body

Marcel described various ways of *how* one relates with the body, the world, and other persons in the world. As well, Marcel suggested "the world exists in the measure in

which I have relations with it, which are of the same type as my relations with my own body—that is to say inasmuch as I am *incarnate*” (*Metaphysical Journal* 269). An incarnate being relates to an existing world in, with, and through her own body. My relations to my body are foundational to my being in the world. Marcel found at the root of these relations one’s foundational experience of incarnate being, I am bound to my body. Marcel used the word “corporeity” to describe the concept of body as always being “the body of” or the body belonging to someone (*Being and Having* 82). Thus, Marcel viewed corporeity to be “the frontier district between being and having” (82). One experiences relations of being and having in, with, and through one’s body.

Marcel used a reflective approach to explicate one’s relation of being and having a body. Marcel approached the study of “the mysterious relationship” experienced in one’s own body from a philosophically reflective perspective. Although Marcel titled one of his lectures “Outlines of a Phenomenology of Having,” in his study of being and having a body Ricœur noted that Marcel did not use phenomenology (473). In that essay, Marcel used the word “phenomenology” to distinguish his exploration of experience from a psychological approach to experience (*Being and Having* 158). Ricœur contended that Marcel explored the being-having dynamic by sometimes using Husserl’s eidetic analysis of “notional distinctions” and other times using existential description (473). Although he sought descriptions of essential structures, the corpus of Marcel’s work is not singularly phenomenological in nature. He incorporated examples from his own experience to illustrate differences between being and having.

In addressing *how* a person is in the world, Marcel acknowledged that one relates to the body, the world, and other persons through both *being* and *having*. Gallagher

asserted that Marcel explored being and having as opposing relations with respect to the world (53). Scholars noted that some of Marcel's distinctions between being and having are so evident that they are not remarkable (Straus and Machado; Treanor). However, with respect to dialogue, being and having one's body provides interesting openings for understanding one's relationship with self, other, and the world. Marcel's discussions of being and having do not just deal with the body. Relating through being and having shapes one's positioning in the world. This section explores Marcel's description of having my body, being my body, and participation in my body.

Having My Body

Marcel grounds the study of how one is in, with, and through body with the certainty *that* one is bound to one's body: body as mine. He claimed "the body is the prototype of having" (*Being and Having*). The way one has one's body informs how one has in general. This section explores Marcel's characteristics for how one *has* one's own body. Having means my body as mine but not as an instrument, to have the power to, to have the disposal of, to experience consequences for treating one's body as possession, and to have for oneself.

My Body is Mine But Not an Instrument. Having one's body means possessing one's body. Having implies "being able to dispose of, having power over" (*Being and Having* 82). For example, Marcel claimed that "my body in so far as it is *my* body...which we are expressing here by saying it is something I *possess*, something that belongs to me" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 92). One's body is always experienced as one's own. In his early work, Marcel described how one might feel as though one relates to one's body as an instrument. He suggested that if one viewed one's own body as a tool, one

could treat one's own body *as if* it were "not-mine" (*Existence* 67). However, this treatment of the body as instrument apparently creates a distance between "I" and my body. But an "I" can never distance oneself from "my body" (*Metaphysical Journal*). To speak as if one's body were an instrument was to speak as if one's body were not one's own (*Creative Fidelity* 23, *Existence* 67). Body is always related to as "my body" (*Creative Fidelity* 23). Marcel contended that, it was in fact, an "impossibility to view my body as an instrument or appendage" as not one's own (*Creative Fidelity* 23). A relation of "instrumental mediation" was only possible toward entities other than one's own body (*Existence* 67). One could not treat one's body as if it were an instrument to be used.

One cannot relate to one's body as if it were an object. Because "my body is posited as the center in relation to which my experience and my universe are ordered," relating to one's own body as if it were an object is actually impossible (*Existence* 68). The body functions as the center *from* which one relates to phenomena in the world. The body positions one in relation to all other entities in the world. Thus, one cannot ever create distance from the body to treat the body as an object. While one may view the body as a constituted by parts such as bones, limbs, or organs, one cannot create distance from the body felt as a unity, my body. To view one's body as an instrument or as a possession implies a denial of one's body as incarnate being: a being in-relation to a particular body as one's own body.

To Have the Power To Act. Marcel saw the body as "consisting of its assembled powers" that were revealed in "an organized body's activity" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 99). Marcel connected possession to having power over or having a capacity to exercise (*Being and Having*). He implied that "power is something which I experience by

exercising it or by resisting it” (159). Power-to-act show connections between body, feeling, and action. Straus and Machado suggested that the body, as a “cluster of powers,” reveals the embodied personality’s possibility to—and capacity for—act in the world around him (134). They stated that “the body is the means for manifesting the personality” (134). Because the body manifests these powers, the body is one’s site for acting in and upon the world. One’s ability to use this body as *my* body reveals one’s power over the body, a power “to extend the body itself” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 100). In, with, and through one’s body, one has the power to act.

To Have the Disposal of. Although one has the power to act in one’s body, Marcel qualified that one does not full possession over one’s body. Marcel stated, “I cannot say that [my body] is at my disposal” (*Being and Having* 82). One cannot dispose of “that which gives me the disposal of things” (82). The owner of the body-as-given does not have complete power over the body but, in some way, receives the body. The body that gives me power to dispose of things cannot be fully possessed.

To illustrate these ideas, Marcel offered the example of suicide. One of the limits to having-one’s-body appears in suicide. Marcel allowed that a person does indeed have the power to dispose of one’s body through killing oneself. This power to dispose then puts one in a state of being completely dispossessed of one’s body and thus powerless to continue disposing of one’s own body (*Being and Having*). Marcel interpreted suicide as a use of one’s power over one’s body that leads to extinguishing the presence of all power or possession of one’s body. He viewed suicide as one *thinking* one disposes of one’s own body (82). In actual experience, when one acts as if one has power to dispose of one’s body, the “having” or possessing of one’s body disappears. When a person

commits suicide, a person loses the power to possess one's body. There are limits to a person's ability to have power over one's body. One may experience one's body a "sort of irresistible encroachment of my body upon me" (83). Dimensions of one's body lie outside a realm of possession, and the body-as-given acts upon or is present to the embodied one.

Consequences for Treating My Body as Possession. According to Marcel's experience, one's body resists possession. One might *try* to relate to all phenomena in the world as things to be possessed (*Being and Having*). Yet if one attempts to relate to one's own body as some *thing* to possess, the body reacts. If one treats one's body as if it were one's possession, the body exercises a "tyranny" over me (164). Reflecting on his own experience, he claimed, "I seem to be annihilating myself in this attachment, sinking myself in this body to which I cling. It seems that my body literally devours me" (164). The act of having begins as possession by the subject who acts. Marcel suggested that the thing possessed begins to absorb the possessing subject. My body—when treated as a possession—tends to blot me out, and I become absorbed by the possession.

The relationship one has in, with, and through one's body affects oneself. Marcel reflected on experiences in which one's treatment of one's own body-as-possession shapes the acting subject. Sometimes when one treats one's body as if one fully controlled all aspects of one's body, one is in turn "absorbed" by the body. One such example might be one's seeking to have a perfect physical body. A person seeks to diet, work out, and protect one's own body from any experience that would make one gain weight or lose muscle tone. Initially, one feels like one has power over one's own body, but, little by little, one begins devoting all of one's time to this project. One becomes

absorbed by the project of losing weight or gaining muscle tone. One only thinks about one's body and the effects of actions on the body. A relation that began as a person controlling his own body and bodily actions becomes a relation in which the person is controlled by his addiction to dieting and working out. Relating to the body through *having* shapes the person himself.

To Have for Oneself: To Keep for One's Self. One may feel as if one alone possesses one's body. Thus, to have one's body can imply "*to have for one's self, to keep for one's self, to hide*" (*Being and Having* 82, 160). One relates to one's body as an internal intimate realm that one keeps to oneself. Having as a "keeping for one's self" is like having a secret. When one *has* a secret, the secret "appears to me to be inside, rooted inside the body" (160). Marcel suggested that if one can have for one's self one could also reveal the secret or one's intimate realm. Marcel describes that the person feels a "tension, a dialectic of interiority" (Zaner 27). Marcel calls this tension an "opposition of within and without" (*Being and Having* 149). One *has* a secret because one can also reveal the secret to another person.

Marcel contended that one's capacity to have places one in relation to other persons. One can have for one's self and withhold from another person. Thus, "the characteristic of having is to-be-exposable" (*Being and Having* 161). One can expose what one possesses or one can withhold one's possession. Having requires the presence of the other. "The statement 'I have' can only be made over against *another* which is felt to be other" (161). One has in the presence of others.

In theory, one might relate to one's body as instrument by standing apart from one's own body. Marcel suggested that one might also relate to one's body as *more* than

an instrument (*Creative Fidelity* 22). He wondered what does it mean *to be* the instrument (*Mystery of Being* 1: 99). In considering one's body as what one *is*, Marcel found an intimate bond of relation. If one *is* one's body, then one "erase[s] the gap" that one has falsely constructed that one might stand at a distance from one's body as if one's body were an instrument (100). Marcel claimed that to think of one's body as *my* body renders the relation-to-body as instrument impossible. This contradicts his proposal that I am *my* body. Describing one's body as one's *own* body means that one is *not* in an instrumentalizing relation (100). When one attempts to relate to one's body through having, one experiences a body resisting possession or assimilation. As one *has* one's body, a relation of participation-in-body is revealed. As being in body one *is* in relation in, with, and through one's body.

Being My Body

Marcel described one's experience of existence as a hereness and nowness happening in one's body. He stated, "between me and all that exists there is a relation (the word is quite inadequate) of the same type that unites me to my body" (*Metaphysical Journal* 274). In this relation to all of existence, "my body is in sympathy with things . . . that I am really attached to and really adhere to all that exists—to the universe which is my universe and whose center is my body" (274). In my body as my body, one "is in sympathy with things" relating in a relation of *being with*. Marcel explicated this relation of *being with* that happens *in body* as signaling body as history, being through belonging, and being in the presence of.

Marcel saw all affiliations in, with, and through the body beginning in a relation of incarnation. To answer "What am I?" Marcel asserts one cannot merely reply,

“Someone who has a body” (*Being and Having* 153). An experience of incarnate being reveals one’s awareness that one is bound to this body. He used the concept of bonding to describe how incarnation reveals one bound to one’s body. Marcel contended that one’s “corporeity” implies a relation of having as well as being (84). Marcel connected one’s corporeity to one’s history. Corporeity “implies what we may call historicity. A body is a history, or more accurately, it is the outcome, the fixation of a history” (84). The body is a history. A body is the outcome of history. Marcel called the “hereness and nowness” of an existing person his “ecceity” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 175). Marcel’s description of body as history sounds as being in the world as body. Body *is* history. Body as history signals that one *is* in the world.

One relates to one’s body through being as belonging. Marcel used the verb “belonging to” to depict how a person is in relation to his body (*Being and Having* 11). However, although one’s body belongs to a person, this belonging is not a total: “my body belongs and does not belong to me” (148). A body-that-belongs-to-me involves a realm that cannot be possessed. Marcel sometimes called this realm that could not be possessed “a presence” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 209). One experiences in one’s own body a realm that defies possession. In one’s own body, one comes into a presence. Marcel described this presence as a presence that signified *being*.

When Marcel asked, “What am I?” he replied, I am “in-the-presence-of” my body as “something other than itself” (*Being and Having* 153). He was not conflating a presence with an object. To Marcel, presence does not mean “just being there” but is tied to one’s “sense of existing, of being in the world” (*Viator* 15). He found presence experienced in varying intersubjective situations and in one’s own inner world (*Mystery*

of *Being* 1: 205; *Homo Viator* 15). For Marcel, “wherever there is being there is presence” (Gallagher 55). Paul Ricœur stated that for Marcel, “existence designates the fund of solid, indivisible, undeniable presence attested to by the sensuous presence of the world at the most radical level of feeling” (477). For Marcel, one experiences the presence of world through one’s feelings (Ricœur). Yet this presence was not experienced as an object but rather gave “reference to the vivid and qualified experience of an incarnate person” (Ricœur 477). One experiences presence as body-object and body-subject.

Presence is also experienced in interactions with an other—a being-in-relation to world or others. Marcel connected presence to being that is “recognized by some other person” (*Homo Viator* 15). In being recognized as existing or being-in-the-world, one becomes aware of one’s own presence. Gallagher clarified what Marcel meant by saying “in-the-presence-of.” Gallagher noted that Marcel did *not* mean presence to be an “*esse* or act of existing of a thing” (55). Marcel suggested that “a reality is uncharacterizable, and therefore *is*, in so far as it is given to me as presence” (Gallagher 55). A reality that *is* for a person is spatially related to the person as in it *is* before the person. Gallagher claimed that for Marcel, “my body is apprehended as a presence; the thou is given to me as co-presence” (55). In this way, being-as-presence involves a being-before another. Being-before as an action means that a person who *is before* something is not in full control of that something. Being resists possession. When someone is in-the-presence of being, that being resists possession. One is in the presence of uncontrollable, unmarked territories. In relating to one’s body, one comes into the presence of a realm overabounding what one can possess and objectify.

Being and Having a Body as Participation

Marcel's description of the verbs being and having need not be set against one another but may be engaged along a continuum. James Collins found that Marcel's description of relating to human reality included a "unique complexus of having and being" ("Introduction" xiv). Collins explained this "complexus" as allowing one to exist independently of being reduced to an instrument or possession while also possessing a materiality that could not be abstracted to "pure being" (xiv). Having and being one's body emerge along a spectrum:

My body is *my* body just in so far as I do *not* consider it in this detached fashion, do not put a gap between myself and it. To put this point in another way, my body is mine in so far as for me my body is not an object, but rather, I *am* my body.

(*Mystery of Being* 1: 100)

My body is acknowledged as my body when approached in an intimate way. If one addresses one's body as something one *is* one can ascertain that "my body is *my* body" (100). Marcel invites attending to one's relation with one's body as a being in, with, and through one's body.

One's orientation toward one's body as immediately felt as mine reveals that one is bound to one's body through possession (my body) and through being ("I *am* my body"). This continuum of being-having is experienced through participation in existence as incarnate being. One's body is a situation in which one participates (Gallagher 17). Existence in and through the body happens as active and receptive participation (*Creative Fidelity* 23). Marcel claimed that in this participation one's "essential immediacy is disclosed in this act alone" (*Creative Fidelity* 24). At the heart of existence, as incarnate

being one is bound to one's body, having one's body and being in, with, and through one's body. As incarnate being one participates actively in being. In this way, being in, with, and through "my body" one blends being and having through possession and being.

Being as being-in-the-presence-of reveals one's positioning in the presence of an other. The other may be one's own being or one's body. For Marcel, having also involves positioning oneself before the other as other. He claimed "the statement 'I have' can only be made over against *another* which is felt to be other" (*Being and Having* 161). One's relation of having "carries with it references to another *qua* another" (149). When one has something, one has the possibility of "keeping for one's self . . . [and a] giving out" of one's self (149). In having, one has something over against an other.

This section summarized Marcel's distinctions between relating to the world through being or having as experienced in one's body. Marcel explored the limits to *having* one's body through possessing or dispossession of one's body. He proposed that one relates to one's body in being as belonging and coming into presence of one's body as other-than. Finally, being and having may be engaged along a continuum. In relations of being and having, one comes into the presence of others. Next, this chapter takes up Marcel's discussion of the self who experiences body and situation.

Self Who Experiences Body and Situation

Marcel saw the self as the one who relates to the world in, to, and through one's body. He did not find the relation between self-body-and consciousness a simple interaction. Marcel's explorations of this relation revealed not just problematic but metaproblematic relations. Marcel reflected in response to the complex discussions about self within his philosophical milieu. He claimed that modern discussion of the meaning of

self had rendered the topic “a problematic realm” involving a questioning of the “very existence” of self (*Mystery of Being* 1: 83). Marcel’s writing spanned years that included modern studies of self and postmodern suggestions about the limits of these studies.

Marcel’s discussion of the self takes place amid modern discussions. In a postmodern situation, ideas from the past may bear meaningful implications for other historical moments. Marcel’s reflections on self offer insight for postmodern explorations. In *The Self after Postmodernity*, Calvin O. Schrag noted complexities in modern and postmodern studies of self. These studies of self include the terms subject, agent, ego, identity, mind, psyche, and myself. Schrag suggested that while classical philosophers described the self-as-substance, modern philosophers viewed “self as transparent mind” (9). Schrag opened up the meaning of self from the limited signaling of one’s mind to a broader revelation of one’s “sense of self” (9). Schrag suggested approaching the study of self by studying “who” was at the heart of this experience of one’s self (4). Although Marcel’s descriptions of self pre-date Schrag’s study, Marcel’s study of self complements Schrag’s work. Marcel’s explanations about the self offer meaningful interpretations for this historical moment.

This section turns to Marcel’s texts to understand how Marcel approached describing the self. He explored his description of the self in response to the question: Who experiences the body? This section addresses this question exploring the self in relation to one’s particular body, consciousness as distinct from the body, how the self reveals other, and freedom as connected to the self.

Marcel's Understanding of "Self"

Marcel's exploration of the meaning of self functions as an "additive approach"¹⁹ in response to and in distinction from other explanations. Marcel differentiated his descriptions of self from modern philosophers' proposals he had studied at university. Marcel thought that Cartesian and Kantian proposals for the self emerged from the assumption that "all experience in the end comes down to a self's experience of its own internal states" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 49). According to Marcel existing views of experience centered on the self's awareness of its own states and did not provide a full description of his actual experience of self. In response to these descriptions, he turned to his own lived experience of self felt in body.

The complexity of a study of self begins in a struggle to find words to describe self. He used *self* interchangeably for "person, a being capable of asserting I" (*Creative Fidelity* 27). As Marcel asked, "Who am I?" he sought to understand the "I" who simultaneously asked and was being reflected upon. To get at this "I" he asked the question: "What am I?" and he found that "the question 'What am I?' seems to demand an answer that can be conceptualized but at the same time, every answer that can be, seems in danger of being rejected or falling short" (*Being and Having* 109). He encountered the challenge of conceptualizing the meaning of "I." He acknowledged that although one has frequent contact with self, one experiences "disquieting ambiguity" in describing it (*Mystery of Being* 1: 83). Marcel faced the limits of linguistic description of concepts that elude clear definitions. For the reflecting questioner attending to the "I"

¹⁹ "Additive approach" refers to hermeneutic approach that builds upon other ideas (Arnett and Arneson 108).

who reflects, concepts like “self” “subject” or “person” remained “ungraspable” (171). Marcel offered varying descriptions of what he meant by self.

Marcel suggested that descriptions of the self should not translate the person into an abstract entity. Marcel contended that person is always “a somebody, a particular individual (though not merely that)” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 86). In addressing other persons, individuals frequently employ objectifying language used by the state for identification of its citizens (*Mystery of Being* 1). Marcel declared that a person could not be identifiable from a list of descriptive headings—one’s biological sex, income, or marital status—given by medical professionals or the state (86). Marcel understood the self emerging in, with, and through a particular body.

Self in Relation to My Body

Marcel explored the meaning of self as related to the body. When describing *how* one is embodied, Marcel stated, “[M]y body is only *mine* inasmuch as, however confusedly, it is felt . . . If I am my body this is in so far as I am a being that feels” (*Metaphysical Journal* 243). One’s relation to one’s body as mine reveals relations of being intimately bonded to the body as an incarnate experience.

This incarnate experience of body-as-mine includes a subject “I” in relation to the body, the body as mine. Marcel saw this “bond between me and my body” as having a “mysterious and intimate” character (*Being and Having* 10). The mysterious character of the bond signals the involvement of the reflecting subject in the object of reflection. Busch described that for Marcel, “[T]he body is an object of direct awareness or representation, in the root sense of ob-ject, or ‘thrown against’ consciousness” (9). At the same time, Marcel also saw that one’s body was “not directly known, does not confront

my consciousness but is rather ‘felt’ or grasped in an indirect, non-observational way” (Busch 9). This indicates that the reflecting “I” is intimately involved in the object of reflection—the I-related-to-my-body. Marcel noted that when one’s ability to conceptualize thoughts fail to get at a mystery, one seeks understanding in one’s lived experience. Marcel contended that one could understand this relation between the “I” and “my body” as an experience of being incarnate (*Being and Having* 10). This relation between “I,” “my body” and “self” involves phenomena of existence, consciousness, and consciousness of existence. Marcel argued that one could not truly distinguish between “existence,” “consciousness of self as existing,” and “consciousness of self as bound to a body, as incarnate” (10). Being aware of being-incarnate-in-my-body is connected to consciousness of the experience that one exists.

Self and body are joined in one’s personality. In *Homo Viator*, he stated that by definition personality “never fix[es] itself or crystallize[s] itself finally in this particular incarnation...because it participates in the fullness of being from which it emanates” (26). Marcel interchanges the term personality, person, subject, and self (*Homo Viator*, *Existential Background*). Marcel did not view self as a fixed way of being in the world. Rather, he associated incarnation and self to one’s ongoing participation in being. Marcel saw being in the world as an ongoing participating in the world. Being involves an active journeying toward fulfillment. Being is “that anticipated plenitude which is foretasted and *hoped for*” (*Tragic Wisdom* 53). Being in the world involves moving toward a fulfillment in a future situation. Anderson argued that Marcel’s description of being as anticipated plenitude is an existential exigency (“Gabriel” 40). One’s moving toward fulfillment in a future situation responds to an exigency that requires one’s ongoing participation in

being. The changing nature of self is incorporated within Marcel's discussion of self in relation to body.

Consciousness and Body

Marcel saw in an incarnate, embodied "I" as a type of consciousness present in one's experience of one's body. Marcel differentiated his view of an incarnate "I" from other philosophical and psychological descriptions of consciousness. He granted that philosophy has reflected extensively on consciousness (*Metaphysical Journal*). While psychology involves the study of "the body in terms of materialization" Marcel wondered if this method allows one to "sufficiently grasp all that [the body] involves" (*Metaphysical Journal* 130). He called for a study of the body "beyond psychology" (130). Marcel's reflections offer additive insight into consciousness.

For Marcel, one's consciousness is distinct from one's body. He argued that "consciousness is above all consciousness of something which is other than itself" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 52). One's consciousness is directed at some-*thing*. Because one can direct one's consciousness at one's body, he claimed, "[C]onsciousness is essentially something that is the contrary of a body, of a thing" (50). According to Marcel, descriptions that consciousness is a phenomenon persisting over time could "only exist ideally" (52). He contended that this description of consciousness was an abstraction. He argued that one's body constituted real "permanence" over against abstract descriptions of one's consciousness (52). A real body stands in distinction from an abstract consciousness.

Marcel suggested that modern proposals for consciousness dismissed the embodied dimension of consciousness. He took issue with modern proposals for

consciousness that included “states of consciousness” (50). These “states” were abstractions that depicted “consciousness as a sort of bodiless body” (50). Although he did not study consciousness extensively, he contended that however one described consciousness, consciousness should be considered as distinct from body. Marcel called attention to the body as real, permanent entity resisting abstraction.

In these unclear descriptions of how self, consciousness, and body relate, Marcel reveals his own uncertainty about these relations (*Mystery of Being* 1). Straus and Machado noted that at times Marcel saw the body as one’s immediate being in the world and sometimes the body as “interposed between the self and the world” (128). However, “taking into account his real intent,” Straus and Machado suggested that Marcel implied that between one’s self, body, and the world, there was no mediation but “only lived immediacy of participation” (128). According to this interpretation, self, body, and world are not distinct entities but “fluid categories” for describing experience (Straus and Machado 128). Thus, for Marcel, “the body is not interposed between the self and the world. It is only in reference to the body’s intentional acts that self and world become defined” (Straus and Machado 128). According to Straus and Machado, the body in intentional acts constitutes the self’s relation to the world. Offering a similar interpretation of Marcel’s work, Anderson stated that for Marcel, “[M]y body is not simply a thing but the embodiment of a free, conscious self-conscious subject” (“Body” 155). Marcel’s works suggest that body is *in* relation to conscious subject and in some way *is* or *constitutes* the relation between the subject and his world.

Self Reveals Other

One's understanding of oneself in relation to the world emerges in relationships with others. Marcel reflected, "I cannot think of myself as existing except in so far as I conceive of myself as not being the others: and so as other than them" (*Being and Having* 104). Before thinking about one's own existence, one thinks of oneself in relation to other people and objects. Reflecting on oneself as other than brings one to find one's own existence. Self emerges "with reference to another" (105). He contended that these other-references were not just one's *thoughts* about the other, but that self emerges *in the presence of* others. In addition to the self arising with others, the self is also given in its incarnate nature.

The self, or "I am," for Marcel was not self-made but given. One's entire existence is born in community. Marcel's idea of self was not a self-sufficient entity like "Kant's transcendental ego" nor like "Leibniz's monad" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 204). Marcel argued that "there is no more fatal error than that which conceives of the *ego* as the secret abode of originality" (*Homo Viator* 19). In theory, a self-sufficient transcendental ego becomes of its own initiative and power. Yet according to Marcel, in reality, each person is born into a family, in an enfleshed bond, connected as biological daughter or son (*Mystery* 200). Even if a biological father never assumes his role of human father, he still is related to the other, who is his daughter (*Mystery of Being* 1: 201). This experience of being born through and into relation with others reveals biological and/or human relations between persons as entryways into existence.

Self is revealed to Marcel as an intersubjective nexus. One's sense of self involves being recognized by others. He stated that one's "consciousness of existence is linked up

with the urge to make ourselves recognized by some other person, some witness, helper, rival or adversary who...is needed to integrate the self" (*Homo Viator* 15). The self, as "I am," emerges in response to recognition by others. One recognizes one's self in relation to other persons. Marcel's description of the self reveals ground for encounter with others. In this ground for encounter, the possibility for decision also emerges. One may recognize and be recognized by others or one may choose to withdraw from the world and turn within oneself. Marcel saw in this turn to self the emergence of ego.

Modern Ego as Self-Contained

Marcel suggested that the self could transform into ego. Marcel named ego as the opposite experience to one's experience of self as a given. For Marcel, the modern definition of ego was "an emphasis" or focus on one's possession of certain qualities or aptitudes (*Homo Viator* 15). These modern descriptions of the ego emerged as misconceptions about what belongs to a person. If a person's ego developed into a total "self-love," the person would become "burdened with [her] self," "feeling an empty void and craving to be confirmed from outside, by another" (*Homo Viator* 16). If one becomes egocentric, one's self may turn in on itself, closing itself off to others beyond one's world. As one delineates territories considered to be one's own, one experiences isolation perpetuated by one's own territorial boundaries.

Freedom as the Positioning of Self

The self is the site of freedom. Marcel saw within experience "structural conditions" that allow an individual to open himself to the other (*Tragic Wisdom* 39-40). One of these structural conditions was the understanding of self as being other- to- body or as being other- to- other- bodies. A second structural condition of freedom could be

one's participation in a situation. In any situation, one is part active and part receptive, experiencing realms beyond one's own control and guiding whether one may or may not participate in various ways.

For Marcel, freedom involves positioning oneself toward the other. Freedom emerges consubstantially with one's own existence. Marcel suggested that as one faces one's own existence, one experiences an "affirmation of a primordial bond, a kind of umbilical cord, which unite [d] the human being to a particular, determined, and concrete environment" (*Tragic Wisdom* 38). Each human being takes a position with respect to this bond to one's particular existence. In one's positioning toward existence, one might deny one's bond to life and commit suicide (*Tragic Wisdom*). One freely positions oneself toward one's own body and one's own bond to others and situation.

One positions oneself as opening or closing toward an other—be it one's own body or other persons—in one's attitude. Marcel suggested that "growth requires opening ourselves to others and the capacity to welcome them without being effaced by them. This is what I have called intersubjectivity" (*Tragic Wisdom* 39). One's attitudes toward the other are expressed in opening oneself to the other so as to welcome the other. One expresses one's attitudes in one's bodily position,

Marcel viewed freedom as acts of conquest. He noted, "[N]o one is born free, every one of us has to make himself into a free man" (*Existential Background* 146). Freedom is not a given part of self's reality but a realm of one's living that involves possible action. In this sense, for Marcel, freedom is "always partial, always precarious, always challenged" (146). One must choose to be free.

Marcel suggested that one is free to assume particular attitudes toward the other, and he saw that some attitudes led to strengthening relations between persons. Marcel saw the self as the one who relates to the world through one's body and as consciousness of one's body. This self reveals a relation-to-other-as-other. One's self position toward one's world reveals a situation of freedom. One is free to position oneself toward the other in various ways. Marcel described being and having as two ways of positioning self in the world.

Marcel's Philosophy of Body: Positioning for Dialogue

As one's "way of being in the world" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 209), one's being in, with, and through body constitutes one's position in and toward the world. Marcel's philosophy emerged in response to concrete situations he encountered. His reflections on being in the world were not meant to reside as abstract definitions for being. Marcel's philosophy of body involves positioning toward others in actions before other persons. I assert that Marcel's philosophy of body as relating-in-body, being-in-presence-of, and feeling the presence of others offers dialogic praxes.

Marcel's philosophy of body calls attention to being in, with, and through body in the world. His reflections on personal and common experiences sometimes include contradictory ideas. He offers *an* interpretation of *how* one relates to the world as incarnate being. Marcel's philosophy of body reveals ground for dialogue as relating-in-body, being-in-presence-of, and feeling the presence of others.

"Here I am!" sounds the exclamation of persons, in space and time, here and now. All encounters begin in being here and now. One "ex-ists" as being manifest, and one is

manifest in, with, and through one's body (*Mystery of Being* 1: 91). One who encounters is a being as body.

Existence emerges in an encounter between, "between me and all that exists there is a relation" (*Metaphysical Journal* 274). To understand this relation between, Marcel invites attending to body, not just any body, but my body. Not only do I exist, I am in the world as bound to this body. Body is always particular body, my body. My foundational relation in the world is I am in the world in, with, and through my body.

One *is* in the world as an incarnate being, always bound to this body. One's situation in the world is incarnate being. Aspects of one's situation are opaque to full understanding—a realm of mystery. As incarnate being, one experiences in one's own internal realm the presence of inexplicable mystery. One experiences in one's inner world, an other presence, not fully understood, but present. One's intimate experience in, with, and through one's own body reveals an encounter with an other.

As body-subject I am my body as relation to others. One's relation to one's own body could be "sympathetic mediation" as an interaction of "non-instrumental communion." In this relation, one comes into the presence of an other who is not addressed as instrument. Co-present to one another, the possibility for communion appears. One's relation to others in, with, and through body signifies that one "in sympathy with" phenomena surrounding him. Being in sympathy with positions one toward the other person. In "Existence and Objectivity" Marcel suggested one can "sympathise with [the other person] and embrace his 'interior becoming'" or one can treat the other as "that other body" who remains closed to ground for feeling-with (70).

One is alongside others both in one's sense of sympathy with and in acknowledging the other as "that other body" closed off to encounter.

One's feelings reveal a site for choice. One may or may not use one's feelings to feel *with* others. Feelings constitute site for choosing one's positioning toward the other. One may feel *with* the others through one's being responsive and receptive toward the other person. Through one's own body becomes aware that the other person is co-present in body. One feels with and for the persons around him.

Through relations of having and being, one positions one's body in relation to all other entities in the world. One bears power to act because one has a body. Thus one acts in, with, and through one's body. Marcel suggested that the relation of having reveals and places one in relation to an other. One's capacity to have for oneself, to withhold in one's interior world, signals a realm between one's internal and external worlds. In *Between Man and Man*, Buber describes the basic move of life is turning toward. Marcel described a tension between internal and external worlds that happens along one's relation of sharing or withholding communication. Even as one withholds information or communication one does so in the presence of others. One's having a body positions one in, with, and through body in the presence of others.

Marcel's description of self as in, with, and through a particular body grounds the self in particular body. In one's consciousness of one's own existence as my body, one becomes aware of oneself as in the world. Marcel suggests that understanding oneself opens one to the other. One has the possibility to close oneself off in a move to possess certain phenomena in one's internal or external world. One, who is self aware of being incarnate being, is aware of oneself in relation in, with, and to one's body. This person is

free to choose his positioning in the world. He is free to become aware of other incarnate beings around him. Freedom itself happens in the person aware of and selecting his positioning himself in, with, and through body.

Marcel's philosophy of body involves positioning toward others in actions before other persons. Dialogue involves choosing a way of relating to an other person. This choice begins in how one relates in, with, and through one's own body "ex-isting" or manifested in the world.

Summary

Marcel offered significant explorations of human embodiment as a lens for understanding how one *is* in the world. He attended to embodied existence and discovered incarnate being as ground for existence. As incarnate being, one is a being who feels. Relations of being or having one's body reveal orientations toward existence. Experiences of self also reveal a relation-to-other-as-other as a situation for freedom.

Marcel proposed that one relates to the world in, with, and through one's body. To exist means to be in body. To be in body means to be in *this* body that is also *my* body. Marcel called this experience incarnate being. Incarnate being forms the ground for and of existence. One is a being who feels. Because one's feelings are an act of participation in the world, one may feel *with* others. One's relation to one's own body through being and/or having one's body reveals common ways for relating to others. One's self position toward one's world reveals a situation of freedom. A being in, with, and through body one may position himself for dialogue. Marcel's philosophy of body reveals ground for dialogue as relating-in-body, being-in-presence-of, and feeling the

presence of others. Marcel's philosophy of body as relating-in-body, being-in-presence-of, and feeling the presence of others offers dialogic praxes.

CHAPTER THREE

Gabriel Marcel's Reflection: Response to the Broken World

Gabriel Marcel's philosophy of the body addresses one's positioning in the world. One's incarnation, or being bound to one's body, constitutes one's ground for being in the world. One is in the world as being-in-body.²⁰ Freedom is present in bodily positioning as one chooses a way of being in the world: toward others or toward oneself. Marcel's philosophy of the body lays the ground for dialogue. Having attended to one's bodily position *in* the world, this chapter turns to Marcel's description of one's reflective positioning *toward* the world.

Marcel sought a description of a person's existence in the world. In *Metaphysical Journal*, he summarized his initial philosophical reflections as his effort to "determin[e] the metaphysical conditions of personal existence" (255). His search to explain these conditions included a study of the person and his world. Marcel used a concrete approach to reflect upon shared human experiences. According to Richard M. Zaner, Marcel's reflections upon human experiences revealed categories for describing the "human condition" (19). Marcel's categories include the person's sense of being and feelings of uneasiness. In his search to explain "metaphysical conditions of personal existence," Marcel blended descriptions of lived experience with identification of commonly experienced abstract categories.

In his descriptions of personal existence, Marcel drew from eclectic and sometimes contradictory interpretations of experience. At times, he adapted a

²⁰ Having addressed in full the description of one's embodied relation to the world as being in, with, and through body, for simplicity in the text, from this point on, I use the phrase "being-in-body" as a shortened version. In the following chapters, I sometimes use the longer version for emphasis.

phenomenological approach for description. Paul Ricœur noted that in some explanations, Marcel shares with phenomenologist Husserl a resistance to a system for his philosophy. Marcel, also similar to Husserl, uses examples to describe experience (Ricœur). Ricœur argued that Marcel, in a distinctly non-phenomenological approach, makes distinctions about particular characteristics of particular entities. Marcel's descriptions of the concrete particular situation render his ideas non-phenomenological. He reflects upon particular, lived human experiences in order to determine shared conditions of personal existence.

Marcel called the world of twentieth century France, the broken world. Human persons living in this broken world shared an experience of a loss of being. Marcel suggested that reflection upon oneself and one's world offers the human person an alternative path through the broken world. First, I describe what Marcel meant by an experience of the broken world. Second, Marcel's search for meaning in the broken world is explicated. Third, I offer Marcel's reflections on being as situated in the broken world. Fourth, I present distinctions between addressing human situations as a problem or as a mystery. Fifth, an overview of Marcel's proposals for different types of reflection reveals various ways of approaching problems. Sixth, openings for transcendence are recognized as valid interpretations of the world. Finally, how Marcel's work contributes an opening for dialogue is addressed. Marcel discussed how one can, in reflection, find ways for encountering meaning within the broken world.

Marcel Interprets the World as the Broken World

Marcel begins his descriptions of personal existence with reflections on one's world. Prior to his philosophical writings, Marcel frequently reflected on experiences of

the world as broken in his dramatic works written in the 1910s and 1920s. In these works he explored characteristics of modern Paris living. In 1971, he reflected that during the 1920s, “I was aware of living in a broken world” (*Awakenings* 122). In his 1933 play “The Broken World,” he described brokenness felt internally by individuals and communally in Parisian society. His philosophical reflection “On the Ontological Mystery,” also written in 1933, provides descriptions of being in the broken world.

The broken world in his drama and philosophy revealed one of his hermeneutic lenses. Alfred Schmitz named Marcel’s broken world lens a “descriptive-explanatory” metaphor (161). The broken world metaphor “explains the anguish” present in the modern world (Schmitz 161). Marcel witnessed in his own life, in his Parisian social milieu and in Western Europe, that the broken world was experienced in individuals’ personal experience. Disquietude appears in varying senses as uneasiness, meaninglessness, misunderstanding, tediousness, or despair.

One experiences the broken world both as a society and individually. As a society, persons experience the broken world when one uses a spirit of abstraction and when a person is reduced to his functions. Individually, one experiences the broken world as a lack of the sense of being and as uneasiness. Marcel connected a feeling of brokenness to individuals’ loss of “a sense of being” (“Ontological Mystery” 9). As well, the broken world involves a person’s “refusal to reflect and refusal to imagine” situations as different from what one experiences them to be (*Mystery of Being* 1: 36). Experiencing the broken world means that one experiences feelings of fragmentation or fracturing in one’s life. Participants in the broken world have feelings of uneasiness and refuse to reflect holistically upon the world. First, Marcel’s description of world is summarized.

Then, participation in the broken world is described as experiencing a spirit of abstraction, focusing on one's function, feeling existentially uneasy, and interpreting the world as meaningless.

Marcel's Description of "World"

Marcel describes "world" as including one's embodied existence *in* the world and one's consciousness of the world. He claimed, "the world *exists* in the measure in which I have relations with it which are of the same type as my relations with my own body—that is to say inasmuch as I am *incarnate*" (*Metaphysical Journal* 269). One relates to the world through one's experience of being in *this* body. One also relates to the world through perception. He stated, "the external world (in the usual sense of the word) is posited on a special plane of existence which corresponds to the special system of conditions which govern human perception" (*Metaphysical Journal* 17). One can only be conscious of being in the world because one *is* and exists in the world (*Metaphysical Journal*). Marcel also contended, "far from knowledge being a reflection of the world, the world is the reflection of knowledge" (108). One relates to the world as being-in-body and through perception.

Experiencing a Spirit of Abstraction in the Broken World

Marcel characterized a person's experiences of the broken world on a societal scale. One might experience a spirit of abstraction. Living in Paris in the twentieth century, Marcel reflected upon collective experiences of abstraction in modern European society. He suggested that in modern European society, individuals are treated as abstract entities (*Against Mass Society*). From as early as 1911, Marcel began and continued to warn against a "spirit of abstraction" in philosophy and in society (*Against Mass Society*

1). When one views each person to be just like everyone else, one has abstracted the individual person to an abstract entity: every man. Marcel saw modern nation states using a “spirit of abstraction” to deal with their citizens (1). As state bureaucracies grew, individuals were reduced to an identification number when their identities registered by state officials (*Mystery of Being* 1: 29). One became an “abstract individual” whose “particulars [could] be contained on the few sheets of an official dossier” (29). Abstracting individual persons into a list of numbers, governments also treated individuals in impersonal ways.

Marcel connected the spirit of abstraction to actions during war. He witnessed how during wars persons were treated in inhumane and cruel ways (*Awakenings*). The government counts the citizens who can supply the soldiers for war and the individuals become a mass of entities sent to battle for the government (*Against Mass Society*). Marcel suggested that a spirit of abstraction leads individuals to treat other persons in an inhumane way (*Against Mass Society*). While participating in “warlike action against other human beings,” Marcel argued that one might “lose all awareness of the individual reality of the being whom [one] may be led to destroy” (117). When one no longer sees the other person as a human being, then one may treat the other person in harmful ways. Both states and individuals engaged in abstraction when encountering other persons. Marcel found this treatment harmful to human relationships. This abstraction of the human person also included focusing on one’s function in society.

Focusing on One’s Function in the Broken World

Another societal characteristic of the broken world was a focus on the individual’s function in society. In his chapter titled “Broken World” from his Gifford Lectures in

1950, Marcel described the effects work in a modern bureaucratic setting has on a person (*Mystery of Being* 1: 27). Marcel reflected on the modern individual's function as a worker in industrial settings or in French state bureaucracies (*Against Mass Society*). For Marcel, if each worker was treated as an abstract individual, then the worker was "just anyone" or just like the next worker in the work environment (Zaner 16). According to Marcel, modern workers experienced common situations that emphasized one's function in the industrial setting.

Individuals engaged work as a defining characteristic of being in the world. The modern worker is defined by one's function in the workplace and becomes a person who is identified by these functions ("Ontological Mystery" 11). Marcel gave the example of someone who worked for the railway. This person's function took the form of following work schedules and thus earning weekly pay. Because one's breaks at work are timed, even one's bodily functions are scheduled (11). One's leisure time is determined by one's work schedule (11). The modern worker has been reduced to his function in the work place. Marcel suggested that this reduction reveals a certain understanding of the human person (11). In this setting, a worker is viewed as a part of a machine, a part that serves the "smooth working of the system" (11). In an extreme case in which a worker dies, the organization deems the worker as no longer functional. Thus a worker's death is like the loss of a machine part that can be replaced with another machine part (12). In this broken world of twentieth century France, a person was reduced to his function.

Feeling Existentially Uneasy in the Broken World

In studying the world, Marcel encountered experiences of disquietude. Marcel's study of the Parisian society uncovered persons who experienced restlessness in their

work and lives. His 1933 reflections described visible sadness in the faces of many people he met at public and private gatherings (“Ontological Mystery” 12). In life or work lived as routine, modern individuals have lost their capacity to find life or work interesting or meaningful. Life and work have been reduced to functions one performs.

Marcel reflected upon the effects on the individual worker who labored mechanically or felt reduced to his function. He described increased feelings of “dull, intolerable unease” within the one “who is reduced to living as though [one] were in fact submerged by [one’s] function” (“Ontological Mystery” 12). Marcel contended that the feeling of unease appeared in workers who were treated according to their production or function (*Mystery of Being* 1: 31). According to Marcel, the modern person feels that life has “become blunted, and flat, and stale,” he thinks “whatever happens, it’s all one to me, I couldn’t . . . care less” (162). Marcel suggested that when one experiences work as a series of mechanized actions, one might lose passion for other dimensions of one’s life. Marcel describes the emergence of an “utter indifference” toward episodes of one’s own life.

Experiences of inner disillusion also mark the broken world. Even if someone is living a busy life, one’s externally busy life is disjointed from one’s inner feelings of emptiness. Marcel noted in “The Broken World”²¹ that the main character Christiane, while living a “busy, rushing life that she seems so much at home in, obviously masks an inner grief, an anguish” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 22). Externally, modern individuals experience fast lives and much change due to societal and technological changes, which cause different internal feelings. Persons in the broken world might, like the character

²¹ Marcel reflected on the meaning of this play *The Broken World* in *Mystery of Being* and his introduction to *The Broken World* translated by Katherine Rose Hanley. As well, his 1933 essay “On the Ontological Mystery” also addressed similar themes that he had explored in the play.

Christiane, mask inner experiences of emptiness or grief. Marcel quoted Christiane's revealing words spoken at a key moment of self-revelation in the play:

Don't you feel sometimes that we are living . . . if you can call it living . . . in a broken world? Yes broken like a broken watch. The mainspring has stopped working. Just to look at it, nothing has changed. Everything is in place. But, put the watch to your ear, and you don't hear it ticking. (*The Broken World* 1:46)

Christiane describes her life unfolding in a world she feels is broken. She qualifies the word "living" with "if you can call it living." Living in the broken world is a version of living. The externals of persons' lives might not signal an apparent problem, but closer reflection uncovered brokenness within. A person within the broken world might be sad, uneasy, despairing, or sense that something is missing.

Distinct Interpretations of the Broken World

One's interpretation of his experience in the world reveals one's beliefs about the world. Marcel addressed various interpretations of "world." Marcel differentiated his interpretation of the world from other scholars. From his particular interpretation, Marcel studied the person in his world.

Marcel connected one's interpretation of the world to one's understanding of the person. He contended that modern organizations implemented an "inhuman philosophy" when treating its workers as impersonal functionaries ("Ontological Mystery" 12). He called this treatment by organizations a "ghastly misinterpretation" of a person's role in organizations (12). In a "broken world of techniques and socialization," modern organizations on organizational techniques and missed the person who *is* participating in the organization (*Mystery of Being* 1: viii). The broken world as "techniques" overrides

the person's active participation in situations (viii). Marcel noted that the meaning of the word "person" had become increasingly uncertain (33). Different interpretations of what it means to be human revealed underlying problems that needed to be addressed. Marcel stood in distinction from other scholars attending to an experience of the broken world.

His fellow philosophers approached these problems from different perspectives. In his 1946 lecture entitled "Testimony and Existentialism," Marcel distinguished his interpretation of a human life from Jean-Paul Sartre's description of a human life. Marcel reflected on Sartre's descriptions of the act of giving as a "destructive" enslavement (qtd. in Marcel "Testimony" 100). Marcel read Sartre's interpretation of gifting as meaning when one received a gift, one was then indebted or enslaved to the gift-giver. Marcel distinguished his view of gift from Sartre's view. Marcel interpreted life as a gift; a person is born into a "tradition" and community that provides for the person ("Testimony" 102). Thus, according to Marcel, persons are born into life-receiving gifts. Realization that one's life is a continual reception of gifts should awaken one's sense of gratitude toward the gift-givers, one's family and divine Creator (102). Marcel suggested that if one did not feel gratitude about life-as-gift, then one would be "doomed to see himself like the man of Heidegger and Sartre, as the victim of some cosmic catastrophe, flung into an alien universe to which he is bound by nothing" ("Testimony" 102). Marcel's interpretation of life-as-gift stood in contrast to Sartre's view of life as victim of catastrophe.

According to Marcel, one could interpret the world from an objective, scientific perspective or from a metaphysical perspective. "Objective thinking" involves seeking clear definitions and precise analysis of phenomena in the physical world (*Being and*

Having 39). Marcel associated objective thinking to the scientific method in which one takes a spectator's perspective toward the object of study (Rosthal). In objective thinking, one stands back from the phenomena to describe the reality. An objective perspective seeks to discover precise descriptions of the material, physical world (*Being and Having*). Marcel found objective thinking a limited method for studying the world. Through objective study, one cannot know or describe "the spiritual content of the world" (*Metaphysical Journal* 97). A person who engages objective thinking cannot access the presence of being, transcendence, or mystery.

Marcel contrasted objective thinking with his reflective approach to the world. For Marcel, the world bears dimensions beyond material, physical realms. Objective thinking does not take into consideration the *being* who reflects upon the situation (*Mystery of Being* 1: 2). With a reflective approach, one can study phenomena in metaphysical dimensions the world. Marcel suggested "from the standpoint of metaphysical knowledge the world remains the site of uncertainty, the reign of the possible" (97). Contrary to the strictly scientific view of the world, Marcel described the world as a site of possibility, as a world open to the presence of being and transcendence.

Marcel offers a distinct interpretation of the broken world and person navigating the world. He studied personal existence in the broken world. The person *is* in an internal realm and in the world. As a being-in-a-situation, a person is shaped by his world. Each person selects his interpretation of the world. One may interpret the world as being meaningful, absurd, material, spiritual, physical or metaphysical. One's interpretation is one's reflective positioning toward the world. Marcel offered his reflections as *an*

interpretation of personal existence in the broken world. In his experience of the broken world, Marcel chose to attend to being: his being-in-the-world.

Choosing to Hope in Being

As he reflected upon the world, Marcel offered explanations for *why* modern persons experience uneasiness and even despair. Marcel described relationships as broken or lacking. The person living in the broken world lacks something. Marcel suggested that an individual experiences the broken world because he has lost his “sense of being” (“Ontological Mystery” 9). He is not aware of what it means to *be* more than just his function at work. He is not aware that he is more than just his biological, material body. A person who is not aware that he is more than his body may feel despair (“Ontological Mystery”). A person immersed in the broken world also “refus[es] to reflect” upon his situation in that world (*Mystery of Being* 1: 36). He does not recognize that he is a being-in-body and participant in being. Marcel invited the modern person to recover his sense of being shaping *who* and *how* he is amid the broken world. The person who refuses to reflect perpetuates his own uneasiness in the world. Marcel proposed that one could recover one’s sense of being through a particular type of reflection: secondary reflection.

Marcel contends that one is free to interpret one’s own life. In the broken world one might feel despair or one might respond to this experience in an other way. One may give into feelings of despair about life. A person who interprets the world as meaningless might despair about his own situation and take his own life (*Being and Having* 119). One is free to interpret the world as meaningless. One is free to despair about life. However,

Marcel suggested that one take an other interpretation of the world—an alternative to despair, hope (*Creative Fidelity*).

Marcel suggested that in hope one could engage healing praxes for being-in-the-world. Marcel invited interpreting one's situation in the world in hope. Before one's situation in the broken world, one can "refus[e] to accept an intolerable situation as final" (*Homo Viator* 34). Marcel calls this refusal hope. Hope involves opening to believe that persons in the broken world may heal. For Marcel, "hope transcends imagination" and "transcends all laying down of conditions" (*Homo Viator* 45, 46). In hope, one thinks about one's situation from an *other* perspective.

Hope remains an attitudinal positioning of one's refusal to accept a present situation as final. In hope, one reflects upon one's situation from an *other* perspective. One's feeling uneasy in the broken world reveals significant characteristics of being human. Marcel proposed that at the heart of one's restlessness is a longing for *being*. Marcel identified one's longing for being as one's *search for* being. Marcel describes a path to healing for being-in-the-broken world. One might attend to being at the heart of one's own existence. One could understand life situations as problems and mysteries. One might reflect on one's being-in-the-world. One could open oneself to experiences of transcendence.

Seeking *Being* Amid the Broken World

From his earliest reflections in 1914 in *Metaphysical Journal*, Marcel associated the condition of the broken world with a lack of sense of being. He called this lack an

ontological exigence.²² The roots of the problems in the broken world spring from a lack of awareness that *being* shapes the heart of human existence. The broken world invites re-interpretation of one's experience. Marcel intuited that being and the need-for-being constitutes experience. His interpretation of the broken world offers openings for reinterpreting experience. Marcel explored uncovering of with ontological exigence and ways of thinking about being as participating in being,

Ontological Exigence

Marcel interpreted ontological exigencies as revealing both an inner need and signaling the person with a way toward responding to this need. Marcel described ontological exigence as one's "need of being"²³ ("Ontological Mystery" 13). In *Homo Viator*, Marcel nuanced his description of ontological exigence with his phrase "metaphysical uneasiness" (138). Metaphysical uneasiness means "to be uncertain of one's centre, it is to be in search of one's own equilibrium" (138). Experiencing ontological exigence involves feeling oneself in search of who one *is* at the heart of existence.

Ontological exigence reveals the human person in search of who he *is*. Marcel suggested that "[W]hat defines man are his exigencies," and he specified, in particular, his ontological exigencies (*Tragic Wisdom* 34). A person is characterized by his relation with being. Ontological exigencies are demands that one feels internally, in which one searches for a way to participate in the world, to *be* more than just function, behaviors, or material realities ("Ontological Mystery"). Zaner noted that Marcel's phrase ontological

²² For Marcel's French phrase "l'exigence ontologique" translator Many Harari suggested "ontological need" (15). Brian Treanor used the phrase "ontological exigence" (58). Richard Zaner translates the phrase as "ontological exigence" (15). This dissertation will use Zaner's translation, ontological exigence.

²³ Marcel's description of ontological exigence was limited because "the characteristic of this need is that it can never be wholly clear to itself" ("Ontological Mystery" 13).

exigence characterizes the human condition itself as “an *exigence* which is concretely manifested as a *quest*” (5). In this quest, the human person seeks for his own identity (Zaner). Zaner suggested that one’s ontological exigence constitutes “the essence of man as such: it is essential to man to seek himself and thus to be in quest of his own condition” (15). As one becomes aware of one’s ontological exigence, one seeks to understand oneself and realizes that one is always in search of this understanding.

Marcel contended that one becomes aware of ontological exigence through a particular type of philosophical reflection: secondary reflection (“Ontological Mystery”). One experiences being on a quest to understand oneself and in this quest, a need of being. Ontological exigence is experienced in three ways, as a restlessness in life, in life-at-issue, and as being called upon.

Restlessness in Life. A person’s need of being becomes evident in one’s longings and restlessness in life. One feels this ontological exigence as dissatisfaction with strictly natural dimensions of life. This need is felt as a longing “to participate in” being (“Ontological Mystery” 14). One participates in being by becoming aware of one’s own being in the world.

A need of being may be felt in one’s unease in one’s being positioned in life. Marcel compared one’s need of being to “a sick person who is trying to find a ‘position’” (*Metaphysical Journal* 290). In a sense, shifting to find a more restful position in a sickbed parallels seeking a different way of being in the world because one’s current way of being in the world is producing uneasiness. Sam Keen noted that Marcel used the image of finding rest to parallel Marcel’s descriptions of restlessness in this broken world. In the broken world, one finds rest as a not-yet-here event. Rest is a teleological

event that lies at the end of a person's journey through life. A teleological pull is signaled through expectation of and longing for fulfillment. Marcel sometimes referred to being as bearing a teleological attraction—a yearning for future fulfillment. Marcel stated that “being is that which does not frustrate our expectations; there is being from the moment at which our expectation is fulfilled” (*Metaphysical Journal* 179). This restlessness indicates an inner sense of a beyond—or transcendent—a realm that offers rest or positions that alleviate uneasiness and that fulfill expectations. One's restlessness in broken world signals a possibility for future rest.

A Life-at-Issue. Becoming aware of ontological exigence, one realizes that one's own life is ontologically marked by uncertainty. For Henri Bugbee, Marcel's concept of ontological exigence signals that one's life is characterized as a “life at issue” (86). A life at issue involves events and situations that are being heard and addressed in the living of everyday life (Bugbee 86). Ontological exigence reveals a life addressed as at-issue and uncertain.

Bugbee suggested that a life at issue foregrounds “our vital needs and their satisfaction, our interests and inclinations, our practical affairs, our relationships of obligation, and haunting anxieties, our hopes and fears, our delights and discouragements” (86). Bugbee argued that when these issues are foregrounded, one can engage one's life-at-issue and may encounter *being* in the exigencies (86). For Bugbee, Marcel's ontological exigence confers a person with “aspiration” and “with commitment” to deeply attend to these issues (86). When a person feels his life at issue, he may turn within himself to address the issue. According to Bugbee, Marcel described key

characteristics at the heart of human experience. Ontological exigencies invite attending to one's own life and reflecting on the meaning of this life.

Being As Called Upon. Marcel suggested that as one explores the answer to the question, "What am I?" one realizes that the question is actually an appeal (*Being and Having* 125). Because one hears this question asked from oneself of oneself, Marcel suggests that the question is heard as an appeal (125). He elaborated "to the extent that I become conscious of *this appeal qua appeal* I am led to recognize that this appeal is possible only because, within my own depths, there is something more inward to me than I am myself" (125). One's self-reflexive question about one's own existence sounds as an appeal from a source not fully defined as one's self. One's introspection upon the question "What am I?" leads one to encounter an appeal heard internally. In one's reflection on who one is, one's own being appeals to a person as "something inward to me than I am to myself" (125). Reflection leads one to encounter one's own being as an appeal.

As beings-in-the-world, embodied persons are invoked into existence. Marcel in his 1945 book *Homo Viator*, described how a person comes into existence through no work of his own:

I *incarnate* the reply to the reciprocal appeal which two beings flung to each other in the unknown and which, without suspecting it, they flung beyond themselves to an incomprehensible power whose only expression is the bestowal of life. I *am* this reply, unformed at first, but who as I become articulate, will know myself to be a reply and a judgment. I myself am a judgment upon those who have called

me into being; and thereby infinite new relationships will be established between them and me. (*Homo Viator* 70-71)

According to Marcel, one's entry into existence as a fetus is an incarnate reply to two persons in intimate relationship. In this interaction, two beings extend "beyond themselves" to a creative power²⁴ that bestows or does not bestow a life upon the two persons. The "*I am* this reply" is one's life as a reply to the "reciprocal appeal." The child's life is a reply to an appeal. Marcel also described this response as a judgment of the two beings. This judgment consists of naming the two beings as parents and establishing new biological relationships between the child and the parents. At the beginning of one's existence, one *is* a reply to a relationship. For Marcel, one's genesis as being-in-body, as fetus, happens as a reply to an appeal. At the beginning of one's existence, one comes into being as called upon.

Marcel's description of one's being as an appeal may also be connected to ontological exigence. Henri Bugbee viewed Marcel's description of ontological exigence as a call upon the individual person. Marcel's ontological exigence is "the way in which we are *as* called upon" (Bugbee 91). Bugbee suggested that a calling *invites* "a participation in being with all one's heart, with all one's soul, and with all one's mind" (91). Marcel invited awareness of being at the heart of experience. Marcel's sense of ontological exigence "leads to the discovery of ourselves as active agents of an initiative grounded in receptivity" (Bugbee 91). A person seeks to discover what is at the heart of his own existence and encounters an appeal sounding during the search. A person participates in ontological exigence through active reflection and receptive hearing of the appeal. Bugbee claimed that Marcel's description of the person as both active and

²⁴ In this particular text, Marcel does not specify the nature of this "power."

receptive participant in being was “perhaps M. Marcel’s most fundamental contribution to the reflective life of the West” (92). One is, ontologically, *as* being who is called upon.

According to Marcel, a person experiences ontological exigencies in his own life as a restlessness, a life-at-issue, and as being as called upon. At the heart of one’s experience, one is in relation to being. Due to the nature of being, one does not possess this being but is in relation to this being. Marcel used the verb *participate* to describe one’s internal relation to being. Participation offers people a way of reflecting upon being and of responding to ontological exigencies.

Thinking about Being as Participating in Being

A description of *being* involves a relation to being. The one reflecting upon one’s being takes the simultaneous roles of reflecting subject and participant-in-being. Marcel used the term *participation* to describe how one thinks about being. For Marcel, participating in being involves both active and receptive dimensions (Bugbee 92). This section addresses Marcel’s study of the reflecting subject who questions being and of thinking about being as participation in being.

Who am I, Who Question Being? Commencing his reflection on how one is in the world, he quickly turned to the one reflecting on the questions. He asked, “Who am I—I who inquire about being?” as he also wondered, “[H]ow am I qualified to begin this investigation?” (“Ontological Mystery” 176). Finding that Descartes’ *cogito* simply described an “epistemological subject as organ of objective cognition” (“Ontological Mystery” 16), Marcel began by choosing a different foundation for philosophy. Marcel suggested that the phrase “I am” was his starting point, as the “*I am...* presents itself as an inseparable whole” (16). Marcel addressed both questions together: “Am I?” alongside

his questions of “[W]ho am I, who question being?” (177). The one reflecting on the question remains an important participant in reflection.

Marcel saw the reflecting “I” was intrinsically connected to a body. One “must resist the temptation to treat the *I* as a container...like the theory that the body is in the mind” (*Metaphysical Journal* 176). The “I” acts as an incarnate being-in-body, who is always grounded in this situation. Marcel eschewed viewing the subject “I” as a separate cognitive entity. A reflecting subject can never stand apart from his mind or his bodily reality (*Philosophy of Existence*). Marcel did not view the mind as structuring reality. One could not disengage the “being who thinks” from the being “who endeavors to *think* himself” (“Ontological Mystery” 17). Thus, the one who reflects on life does so as mind and body. Marcel called for rejecting “dissociation between the intellectual and the vital with its resultant over- or under-estimation of the one or the other” (17). One relates to reality intellectually and vitally.

For Marcel, thinking involved an element of coming into the presence of. He described thought as “deepening of metaphysical knowledge” that meant experience “turns inwards towards the realization of itself” (*Philosophy of Existence* 128). Words like “turning inwards” and “deepening” signal actions like entering into or coming into the presence of. Understanding as a coming-into-the-presence-of signaled a presence already there before the questioning. Marcel interpreted the already-there presence as *being*. One reflects on life as a “totality of being” and one reflects “about [oneself] as a totality” (“Ontological Mystery” 177). A totality of being is a realm in which one participates and is understood. Before one reflects, one *was*, and one *was in* the presence of being.

To Think About Being Is to Participate in Being. For Marcel, being over-abounds one's full reflective or objective analysis. When one experiences ontological exigencies, one does not just think about being from a distance one *participates* in being. In his notes from 1912-1913, Marcel suggested "being is neither substance nor representation. It can only be conceived as that in which thought participates" (*Philosophical Fragments* 84). Marcel viewed thought-being relationship as a relationship of participation. When one tries to get to the meaning of one's own being, one never arrives at complete understanding of what one's being means. In this way, one never achieves full understanding of being.

One seeks to understand one's own being. Yet, Marcel notes that one's search "does not provide me with a justification of myself which can satisfy me totally" (*Metaphysical Journal* 290). As well, he described *being* as an intrinsic significance, as that which "withstands—what would withstand—an exhaustive analysis bearing on the data of experience and aiming to reduce them step by step to elements increasingly devoid of intrinsic or significant value" ("Ontological Mystery" 14). In this sense, experienced as inexhaustible phenomena, being is engaged by and over-abounds a person's thinking, interpretation, or inner world. One participates *in* being.

Marcel's sense of knowing the world included something more than just thinking about the world. Marcel reflected on the world by engaging both thinking and being, a relationship engaged through participation. Tunstall stated that Marcel reflected upon being as "who we are and not what we are" (17). Tunstall suggested that Marcel best described how one relates to being as participation. Therefore, participating in being is "something we do, not something we merely think about" (Tunstall 17). Part of one's

experience of being involves one's participation in being. So the one reflecting on being can never get outside of the experience in order to fully define the experience.

Bugbee described Marcel's ontological exigency as "the way in which we are *as* called upon" (91). Before one approaches reflection upon how one is in the world, ontological exigencies signal that one is *already* called upon. One receives existence as being called upon. Bugbee noted that Marcel's sense of participating in being involves realizing oneself "as active agents of an initiative grounded in receptivity" (91). Marcel's participating in being then allows for the "I" to experience both recipient who is *called upon* by being and also actor who appreciates or acknowledges being.

A reflecting subject thinks about his own being by fully participating in the process. Marcel described reflection as practiced by a participating subject and participant-in-being. The one who reflects upon one's life and experiences of being is both active and receptive participant. Marcel saw that such a reflecting participant approaches life situations in particular ways. At times the world presents itself to the person as situations in need of resolutions. Marcel described life situations as falling into different categories: problems and mysteries. In the broken world, one encounters disquietude and a life-at-issue. One must address differing life situations in particular ways.

Problem and Mystery

The broken world presents a person with various situations that require distinct approaches. According to Marcel, unresolved situations require resolution and may be described as problems or mysteries. Through reflection, a person identifies the issue as a problem or a mystery. In both situations, the one who-reflects-upon life approaches these

situations as an involved participant. Problems are differentiated from mysteries based on the role of the reflecting subject. Marcel named certain situations “metaproblematic.”²⁵ In the broken world, one encounters problems, mysteries, and metaproblems. A situation as problem or as mystery influences the type of reflection engaged by the one reflecting. Marcel proposed that one’s type of reflection responds to the particular situation.

He contended that in reflecting on certain questions or problems, one is oriented toward the question as if one stands before the ideas, attempting an objective approach. Marcel named this type of situation a problem: “I who articulate this problem, I should be able to remain *outside* of it—whether that be *before* or *beyond* the problem that I state” (“Ontological Mystery” 176). He explained that “a problem is something which I meet, which I find complete before me, but which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce” (*Being and Having* 117). An objective approach involves viewing situations as problems to be addressed. A problem is a situation that may be seen and observed from a distance.

A mystery cannot be addressed from a distance. A mystery is “a problem which encroaches upon its own data, that invades the data and thereby transcends itself as a simple problem” (“Ontological Mystery” 178). Thus, one cannot position oneself outside the mystery for objective, or distanced, knowledge. He also described mystery as a “problem that trespasses on its own givenness: I, who inquire about the meaning and the conditions of possibility of this encounter, cannot place myself outside or opposite it” (180). The one reflecting upon the mystery is involved in and acted upon by the situation.

²⁵ Some translations use the term “the meta-problematical” for types of problems (Hanley, “Ontological Mystery” 178). Other translations describe a problem as “metaproblematic” (Treanor 63). Zaner uses the word “metaproblem” to describe the situation. This project will use metaproblem as a noun and metaproblematic as an adjective.

One's thinking about one's own body is an experience of mystery. As one tries to understand that "I have a body. I use my body. I feel my body," one experiences one's body as a mystery. When one thinks about one's own body, one cannot abstract the idea of one's body as a summation of body parts ("Ontological Mystery" 179). One cannot separate oneself from the body in order to make an abstraction of the selfsame. One's own body over abounds one's realm of objective analysis. Marcel suggested that one's soul-present-in-one's-body endows the person with a "presence of me to myself" (179). He does not fully explicate his description. The presence of a soul-present-in-one's body is a given. A given is received and not fully possessed. Thus, one experiences one's body as a mystery.

One stands before a problem and one is involved in a mystery. While one meets a problem, a "mystery is something in which I am myself involved" as a situation that is both experienced within me and before me (*Being and Having* 117). Marcel expanded upon this involvement by describing oneself as "I am engaged in this encounter...I am in some manner interior to it" ("Ontological Mystery"). Marcel described the reflecting subject as participant experiencing mystery *from* within one's inner world and *toward* phenomena surrounding the person. He stated, "[T]he event developed me from within, it acted upon me as an interior principle within myself" (181). In some way, the one addressing the mystery is implicated or involved in the mystery.

Marcel suggested that a problem could be addressed by anyone while a mystery involves a particular reflecting subject. For example, a problem could be a mathematical problem that is governed by laws that may be applied by anyone trying to solve the problem (*Mystery of Being* 1: 213). When facing a problem in thought or in the world,

one might approach the problem using “previously made abstractions” about how the problem may be solved (*Being and Having* 172). Problems may be addressed by “an appropriate technique” that may be applied or repeated by anyone (117). Marcel likened this technique to a scientific method that could be repeated objectively by any person. As one works on solving a problem, one “[does not] have to pay any attention to this self who is working” (“Ontological Mystery” 178). One simply follows universally shared methods to solve the mathematical problem. A problem is addressed by objective methods and does not involve the person addressing the problem.

While a problem may be addressed with a method or a technique, a mystery is not solvable through a similar method. Mysteries involve a particular person addressing the mystery and asking questions. In a mystery, Marcel contended the “ontological status of the investigator assumes a decisive importance” (*Philosophy* 17). A problem allows for universal methods, and a mystery requires particular ground.

Similar to one’s relationship with being, one relates to mystery in an active knowing and passive participation in the mystery. This relation complicates how a person knows phenomena like mysteries. A person cannot know mystery purely as a knowing subject. The reflecting subject knows a mystery through participation. Marcel emphasized the person’s role not only as acting subject but also as receptive stage upon which mystery presents itself. Reflecting on mystery involves a questioning person participating in the matter being questioned.

Marcel also used the term metaproblematic to describe certain problems that are not actually problems but more-than-a-problem. He suggested that one might address a question as a problem and in the process of reflection one could realize that one is

addressing a metaproblem. In this process, the problem “metamorphosed to mystery” (*Being and Having* 117). The problem has become more-than-a-problem. One has “advance[d] into the realm of the metaproblematic” (*Being and Having* 171). When one is reflecting upon one’s own being or mystery, one has entered a “metaproblematical” realm (“Ontological Mystery” 178). Because one’s own being cannot itself be an “object of thought,” the action of participating-in-being is meta-problematical (178).

Marcel’s description of a metaproblem appears to overlap with his description of mystery. At times Marcel used the term metaproblem to describe situations that seem like mysteries. However, Marcel scholars Zaner and Tunstall use the concept metaproblem to describe particular situations in Marcel’s philosophy. Zaner describes Marcel’s project of studying “the metaphysics of personal existence” as an encounter with a “metaproblem” (7-8). As one attempts to study oneself, one reflects upon one’s own existence as a mystery, and one encounters “a peculiar opacity” a realm beyond resolve, a metaproblem (Zaner 8). A metaproblem is also a situation in which one simultaneously affirms being and recognizes that being over-abounds the subject (Tunstall). Tunstall’s sense of participation as metaproblematic coincides with Bugbee’s sense of Marcel’s participation as being both receptive and active.

In the broken world, the reflecting subject encounters situations in his own existence that go beyond an objective study. He finds himself in the presence of a realm beyond problems. While addressing a problem, he realizes he actually encounters a metaproblem.

Broken world situations requiring resolution may be described as problems or mysteries. Before issues experienced in the broken world, one identifies an issue as a

problem or a mystery. This project supports claims that one *can* validly think about mystery within the realm of philosophy. Depending on how one positions oneself toward the situation as being-before-the-person or something in which one is involved, one engages the situation as problem or as mystery. If one addresses certain situations in the broken world as problems, one may miss key elements of the issue. Mysteries mistaken for problems cannot be not fully understood through objective methods. Marcel contended that one might need to identify life situations as mysteries in order to understand life situations.

Philosophical Reflection is a Response to the Broken World

The roots of the problems in the broken world spring from a lack of awareness that *being* shapes the heart of human existence. According to Marcel, persons misunderstand the meaning and value of their own lives. Marcel described how persons in the broken world see life,

The great majority of human beings grope about during their whole lives among these data of their own existence rather as one gropes one's way between heavy chairs and tables in a darkened room. And what is tragic about their condition is that perhaps only because their lives are passed in this shadowy gloom can they bear to live at all. It is just as if their seeing apparatus had become finally adapted to this twilight state. (*Mystery of Being* 1: 64)

Persons in the broken world try to make sense of the “data of their own existence.” Yet, they work in a darkened state unable to see or make sense of the world around them. The persons possess “seeing apparatus” that have adapted to a twilight state, to an uncertain groping one's way through situations.

Marcel called for seeing one's life as it *is* in the broken world. He spoke to everyday people living in the broken world. He proposed that deeper reflection upon one's life in the world would uncover ontological exigence at the heart of personal existence. Marcel called for attending to everyday experiences in the broken world *through reflection*. One addresses situations in the broken world through various types of philosophical reflection.

For Marcel, philosophical thinking, which can be engaged by everyday persons, involves reflecting upon phenomena outside the person and also reflecting upon the *one* reflecting. He stated, "[T]he distinctive note of philosophic thought...is that not only does it move toward the object whose nature it seeks to discover, but at the same time it is alert for a certain music that arises from its own inner nature if it is succeeding in carrying out its task" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 77). Reflection involves a two-part movement of understanding: an active search *active* search for understanding phenomena and *passive* encountering of understanding. Reflection means "attention to," looking and thinking about phenomena (78). He also described reflection as constitutive of all human living: "reflection is linked, as bone is linked with bone in the human body, to living personal experience" (78). Reflection "is one of the ways in which life manifests itself" (82). Reflection constitutes one's way of being in the world and one's understanding of how one is in the world.

For Marcel, reflection involved actively attending to phenomena in the external and internal world. A situation as problem or as mystery influences the type of reflection engaged by the one reflecting. Persons in the broken world may engage primary and secondary reflection. Persons may also contemplate events in the world through

recollection and intuition. Secondary reflection, recollection, and intuition offer praxes for persons to become aware of their own lives in the broken world.

Primary and Secondary Reflection

While discussing his interpretation of reflection, Marcel noted that unexpected situations call one to reflect. One finds oneself unexpectedly telling a lie while one is in conversation with a friend (*Mystery of Being* 1: 79). Even if one saw himself as a truthful person, one finds oneself saying things that do not correspond with one's inner world. Marcel noted that in these situations, one asks, "Am I forced to conclude that I am not the man I thought I was?" (79) The person then wonders to himself, "[N]ow what do I do about this? Because I cannot go on just as if nothing had happened" (79). Yet when one is reflecting upon someone else's actions, if the other person happens to let one down, why is it that one judges the other as untrustworthy, when one does not judge oneself as untrustworthy? In these internal encounters with one's own actions, Marcel claimed, "my reflections...call my own position²⁶ into question" (80). He noted that in this situation, a significant inner recognition happens. Because one is both one who tells lies and also one who condemns others for telling lies, one experiences a paradox within oneself. And in this experience, one stands before an opportunity for deeper communication with oneself about one's own inconsistencies in interpretation or judgment of others (*Mystery of Being* 1). Telling unexpected lies or feeling inconsistencies of judgments reveal inner aporia that invite further investigation. Marcel saw in these inner conflicts an invitation to reflection.

²⁶ In this sentence, "position" meant one's feeling qualified to judge others. Marcel used the word "position" in the previous sentence "why do I feel inclined to judge so severely? Am I in any position to condemn my friend? (*Mystery of Being* 1: 79-80).

Marcel described reflection working at varying inner levels or from distinct approaches to the world. Marcel distinguished between two types of reflection: primary²⁷ and secondary reflection.²⁸ Marcel suggested that the distinct approaches to situations as problem or as mystery engage two different types of reflection. To approach problems, primary reflection “being purely analytical” includes thought that objectivizes what is being studied (*Mystery of Being* 1: xi). Treanor summarized primary reflection as including “detached and technical thinking” and secondary reflection as engaging “participatory and decidedly non-technical” thinking (65). Thomas Busch noted that Marcel viewed primary reflection as a way of thinking that reduces experiences to impersonal descriptions of elements of discourse (8). Primary reflection works on an objective level in which problems are broken into parts to be solved. However, Marcel noted that certain situations bring the person before uncertainty or a paradox. Thus, one cannot use the same way of reflecting on the situation. As explained in the previous paragraph, when one confronts an unexpected situation, when one’s life has been “checked by a certain break in the continuity of experience,” Marcel argued, “it becomes necessary to pass from one level to another through reflection (*Mystery of Being* 1: x). These moments of uncertainty invite a distinct type of reflection, secondary reflection.

For problems that have become metaproblematic or mysteries, Marcel asserted that secondary reflection offers a more appropriate response. Secondary reflection involves “a movement of retrieval which consists in becoming aware of the partial and even suspect character of the purely analytical procedure [of primary reflection]” (*Tragic Wisdom* 235). Secondary reflection involves a standing back to become aware of limits

²⁷ Marcel used the phrase “*pensée pensée*” which Marcel translated to “primary reflection.”

²⁸ Marcel used the phrase “*pensée pensante*” which Marcel translated to “secondary reflection.”

within a strictly analytic approach to situations. Marcel called this movement of retrieval a returning to a broader scope for reflection, stepping back to attend to more aspects. Similar to his spatial description of one standing before problems and within mystery, Marcel used similar words like “experience... put before it” (*Being and Having* 117). One engages primary reflection when one is *before* or somehow *outside* the phenomena. Tunstall described Marcel’s distinctions by noting that secondary reflection involves taking into account the one reflecting while primary reflection acts as if the one reflecting can bracket oneself out of the process (37). Again, in this attending to the person reflecting, the subject of study is implicated in the one studying. Secondary reflection invites uncovering the way the one studying the situation is involved in the experiencing of the situation. Moments of uncertainty or unexpected aporia arise within lifeworld experiences. Marcel has distinguished differences between addressing these aporia as problem or mystery. He also named reflections appropriate for addressing a problem or a mystery.

Marcel viewed primary reflection as lacking attention of dimensions of experience and secondary reflection as offering a fuller account of experience. Primary reflection does not take into account concrete events or the subject performing the reflection (Treanor 66). Because he invited viewing experience as “dialectical,” as both actively engaged and receptively perceived, Marcel suggested that primary reflection also did not take into account the thinker, who was acted upon by the situation (*Mystery of Being* 1: 83). Therefore, primary reflection does not account for “unity of experience” or a fullness of experience as both actively engaged and passively happened upon the person experiencing (83).

Marcel juxtaposed primary and secondary reflection: “where primary reflection tends to dissolve the unity of experience which is first put before it, the function of secondary reflection is essentially recuperative; it reconquers that unity” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 83). This secondary reflection may happen after the primary reflection as a reflection upon the first analysis of experience. Marcel primarily used the term “reflection” as a significant way to understand how the self is both attending *to* and *object of* attention. To describe reflection upon the self or upon deeper dimensions of a situation, Marcel sometimes used the term “recollection” alongside secondary reflection.

Recollection

To deal with metaproblematical situations or mysteries, Marcel claimed that one needed to detach from experience in order to be able to understand these situations (“Ontological Mystery” 23). Marcel named this detaching from experience, “recollection.”²⁹ His description of recollection overlapped with his definition of secondary reflection. This dissertation addresses particular aspects Marcel attributed to recollection. He explicated recollection as involving abandonment:

The act whereby I re-collect myself as a unity; but this hold, this grasp upon myself, is also relaxation and abandon. *Abandon to...relaxation in the presence of...* yet there is no noun for these prepositions to govern. The way stops at the threshold. (“Ontological Mystery” 23)

Recollection involves a collecting oneself, a becoming present to oneself. Again, Marcel returned to an active-passive stance in selecting terms like “abandon to” or “relaxation in

²⁹ While most translations use the English word “recollection,” Zaner maintained Marcel’s French word “*recueillement*” (qtd. on Zaner 7). Zaner described Marcel’s *recueillement* as “a recapture of myself as the unity I am concretely” (7). Zaner clarified that Marcel focused on the act of “inner reflection” not on what Bergson calls intuition (7ff).

the presence of.” In his text, Marcel did not specify the objects or nouns to which these verbs “abandon” or phrases were resolved. He spoke vaguely of descriptive categories for these experiences. One “stops at the threshold” of complete descriptions. In recollection, one understands oneself while being in one’s own presence.

Recollection allows a person to reflect upon and describe one’s relation to one’s own life. Recollection involves a person reflecting upon phenomena in life that cannot be understood through philosophical representation. Within recollection, one becomes aware of one’s power to position oneself so as to understand one’s life. Marcel suggested that a person is a being able to reflect upon one’s own life:

Capable of taking up my position—in regard to my life; I withdraw from it in a certain way, but not as the pure subject of cognition, *in this withdrawal I carry with me that which I am and which perhaps life is not*. This brings out the gap between my being and my life. I am not my life; and if I can judge my life...it is only on condition that I encounter myself within recollection beyond all possible judgment and I would add, beyond all representation. (“Ontological Mystery” 24)

Positions taken toward life involve an act of withdrawal as a drawing back in a shadow/reflective response to life. Marcel described how one knows one’s self or grasps the inner world. He clarified that recollection does not mean “looking at” like a subject of cognition. As one recollects about one’s own life, one is in position and takes up a position toward one’s being-in-life.

In recollection, one pulls back to describe one’s position toward one’s own life. In this act of recollection, one looks over one’s inner world and comes into the presence of *being*. Recollection deals with both actively turning to one’s inner world and receptively

entering into a presence within this world. Marcel used the term “recollection” for this dimension of reflection “because it transcends the dualism of being and action” (“Ontological Mystery” 23). In a particular way, recollection involves dialectical active-receptive reflection as both turning toward and withdrawing from one’s own inner world. Marcel’s sense of recollection has been compared with his description of intuition (Tunstall). Marcel saw distinctions between recollection and intuition that merited explication.

Intuition

Marcel’s concept of intuition functioned as a pre-reflective approach to thinking and understanding. Intuition engages illuminating and withholding functions. As Marcel described the act of recognizing a situation as mystery, he used the term “intuition” to describe how one recognizes mystery (*Being and Having* 118). When one recognizes a mystery, he stated that one is “acting on an intuition which I possess without immediately knowing myself to possess it” (118). Intuition acts within one’s awareness to “illuminate” the person on certain subjects. However, this does not mean that intuition “turns back and apprehends itself (“Ontological Mystery” 25). An intuition is a pre-reflective thought pattern that eludes full definitions.

Marcel suggested that one becomes aware of intuition when one experiences something like recognition of mystery. In *A Vision of Gabriel Marcel*, Brendon Sweetman described Marcel’s sense of intuition as an uncovering understanding of one’s experience that cannot be grasped as a concept. One can become aware of intuition through reflection or recollection (*Being and Having* 118). Intuition deals with recognition of mystery, participation in being, and awareness of ontological exigence.

Tunstall suggested that Marcel's sense of intuition means "appreciating being" not "perceiving being" (39). Appreciating being indicates one coming into the presence of being while perceiving being means that one approaches objects of knowledge as objects (Tunstall 39). Marcel's sense of intuition involved a coming into the presence of being without being able to fully conceptualize what this meant.

Reflection provides a way of acknowledging the reality of the broken world. While using primary reflection to address the world, one views the world from one dimension, an objective, material dimension. However, Marcel contended that one could not understand the human condition by *only* studying an "objective and already existing structure" (*Against Mass Society* 73). One must *also* attend to the person's metaphysical dimensions. Secondary reflection upon the human person and his experience reveals that the human person consists of realms of mystery, a mystery of being. One recognizes and encounters the mystery of being through opening to metaphysical dimensions.

In this knowing the world, he found mysteries and being as revealing one's limits to human knowledge. Marcel also indicated that these experiences of mystery signaled the presence of transcendence within and at the limits of experience. This next section will address aspects of Marcel's description of how one opens oneself to experiences of transcendence.

Interpreting the Broken World: Opening for Transcendence

Marcel acknowledged that his voice sounded in distinction from contemporary interpretations of the world. A modern interpretation of the world "ignores the tragic and denies the transcendent," and "ends by ignoring *presence*" ("Ontological Mystery" 14-15). Modern philosophical interpretations of uneasiness in the broken world offered

explanations that dismissed metaphysical realities. Modern scientific interpretations of the world also threaten to “smother” interpretations of uneasiness as revealing an inner need for transcendence (*Mystery of Being* 1: viii). Marcel saw these interpretations as resistant to experiences of transcendence (36). Participants in the broken world deny the possibility for transcendence. Marcel suggested that opening to experiences of transcendence would bring healing discoveries about the human person (*Mystery of Being*). Openings to transcendence permit encounters with mystery and being. Marcel’s reflections propose transcendence as another interpretation of the world, as experiences from within, as being in the presence of, and as positioning toward. Marcel invites acknowledging experiences of transcendence as possible encounters in the world.

Marcel argued that one could “refuse” to despair about one’s life and one could refuse to view death as the absolute end to life (*Being and Having* 119). He used the word transcendence for “this denial; or more exactly, this overpassing” (119). When one denies that death ends all possibility for life, one overpasses belief that death *is* the absolute end. Marcel saw a person had an ongoing decision to interpret the world as open to life-after-death or ending in death.

Refusing to interpret life as “a tale told by an idiot,” he sought interpretations of the world that signaled a divine being present in the world (“Ontological Mystery” 15). For Marcel, one might refuse to interpret the broken world as meaningless, and in this refusal, open to believing in an *other* interpretation. By believing in transcendence, one *allows for the* possibility of multiple interpretations. Marcel suggested that opening to transcendence allows one to find meaning in the broken world.

Marcel engaged the term transcendence and sought to imbue the word with a distinct meaning. He differentiated his understanding of transcendence from the proposals by his contemporary philosophers. In early twentieth century philosophy, the word transcendence meant “going beyond” (*Mystery of Being* 1: viii). This “going beyond” bore a spatio-temporal dimension. A transcendent experience involves an experience of something that lies “beyond the limits of experience” (46). Marcel questioned modern definitions of transcendence that implied that experiencing transcendence was an impossible experience in the material world. Marcel noted that some philosophers associated belief in transcendence with religious belief. Marcel invited a change in understanding the meaning of transcendence. He invoked opening up the understanding of experience to the possibility of encountering transcendence within human experience.

Marcel described experience as more than just events that were confronted or addressed. Experience is felt from within. He claimed that if one views experience as “an object, flung in my path,” then one can address experience in this horizontal plane as an object that can be categorized or understood in one’s mind (*Mystery of Being* 1: 46). Yet, Marcel found that experience was participatory, not confronted or delimited. Experience as participatory permits transcendence. Marcel’s description of transcendence, as recognized within one’s own experience, was not restricted to a phenomena coming to a person from outside. Experience includes a calling to be open to the presence of transcendent realities both within oneself and within others. He saw that “transcendence is immanent in experience” (47). Transcendence may happen in experience. Thus, Marcel

defended both the possibility of experiencing transcendence and the possibility for transcendence to be “grasped through intimate lived experience” (46, 47).

Marcel clarified that the words external and internal prove problematic in examining how one experiences transcendence. He acknowledged that a transcendent phenomenon appears to the person as if it came from an external source. Marcel suggested describing transcendent phenomena as making a call upon the person (*Mystery of Being* 1). Transcendence heard a call is also heard from *within* the person.

For Marcel, transcendence was also experienced in one’s inner world. One’s experience of ontological exigence within the broken world reveals a desire for fulfillment in something *beyond* this world. Inner desires or needs-for-fulfillment indicated to Marcel that the person was oriented from within toward a realm beyond this world. He linked this longing for fulfillment to an orientation toward the other. Human experience of brokenness in the world reveals a need for being that is also “a need for transcendence” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 39). One’s inner needs signals a need for transcendence felt at the heart of existence.

In his philosophical reflections on personal existence, Marcel arrived at limits to this search, where explanations signaled a realm *beyond* description. He depicted transcendence as a being-in-the-presence-of some phenomena. During one’s experience of transcendence:

There is an order where the subject finds himself in the presence of something entirely beyond his grasp. I would add that if the word “transcendent” has any meaning it is here—it designates the absolute, unbridgeable chasm yawning

between the subject and being, insofar as being evades every attempt to pin it down. (*Tragic Wisdom* 193)

An experience of transcendence involves one standing before a phenomenon that cannot be fully known. One stands before a transcendent entity and feels as if a chasm limits one's getting closer to understanding the entity. One experiences being as a transcendent entity. One stands before one's own being, or as one stands in the presence of a mystery, one cannot understand. If one stands in the presence of a "something," although one recognized its presence, one might not be able to define that something. Recognizing transcendence means being before a chasm, being with that "something," and being unable to pin down or possess total understanding of the phenomenon.

One's experience of transcendence implies positioning oneself toward something *beyond* oneself. Experience itself involves this action of "a straining oneself towards something" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 47). In transcendence, one strains toward some phenomena. For Marcel, "The act of transcendence, in the fullest sense of the term, is characterized by the fact that it is oriented; in phenomenological terms, we can say that it entails intentionality" (*Creative Fidelity* 144). Transcendence involves being directed or oriented toward realities while never arriving at nor possessing these realities. Marcel called this reaching out toward some element of one's own existence a "vertical transcendence" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 39). Marcel viewed transcendence as a response to a call from other and as a call heard from within one's own frame for experience (Treanor 295ff). Transcendence, like being, involves participatory engagement as a reaching out toward a call heard from within. For Marcel, transcendence is a "reaching out of myself toward the intersubjective nature of existence" (Sweetman "Introduction" 6).

Transcendence is experienced as something toward which one strains and which also sounds a call from within one's experience.

Marcel scholar, Patrick Bourgeois, suggested that Marcel provided a philosophy working at the boundaries of experience. Marcel's philosophy described and "interpret[ed] at the limit, the ultimate significance of the mystery of being" (Bourgeois 430). Marcel began in experience and identified limits to knowing experience. His description of experience "open to transcendence" addressed philosophy at the boundaries of experience where multiple interpretations of meaning are possible. Marcel's works invite opening oneself to transcendence through reflecting upon meaning of the word, describing experiences of transcendence, and acknowledging valid experiences of transcendence.

Reflection upon the World: Openings for Dialogue

Marcel's responsive reflection offers openings for dialogue. In dialogic praxes, one assumes an open attitude toward and before the other person. Dialogic praxes, as theory-informed actions, involve reflection and response. I assert that Marcel's responsive reflection as attending to being in the world offers dialogic praxes.

Marcel's invitation to reflect upon the broken world offers an opening for dialogue. Marcel drew attention to experiences of uneasiness in the world. In the broken world, reductive attitudes create multiple challenges for dialogue. Those who live in the broken world are presented with the option to freely interpret the world. One may interpret the broken world as an unchangeable realm one must bear. Experiences of the world as broken involved "one's refusal to reflect and refusal to imagine" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 36). A world resistant to change is an irreparable world. Marcel saw the world as

broken not irreparable. A person may despair about human interactions in the broken world. Or a person can choose to hope in possible meetings like dialogue.

To counter pessimistic approaches to the world, Marcel called for deeper reflection on one's experience of being a person. Marcel's philosophy invites persons to pause to reflect on one's own experiences. He viewed this pause as an opening for reflection about interactions with other persons.

In one's being-in-body in the world and consciousness of being in the world, a person takes a position toward others in the world. One may refuse to practice a spirit of abstraction in dealing with other persons. One may focus on the actual person who is irreducible to his official records or his job description.

This reflection involves a particular type of secondary reflection that attends to the person doing the reflecting as well as the object of reflection. Secondary reflection takes into consideration the reflecting subject. Dialogue begins in one's reflection upon one's positioning in the world.

When a person pauses to reflect upon his own being-in-the-world, Marcel claimed that this person encounters an internal longing for fulfillment. Marcel called one's longing a need for being. Intuition grasps these ontological longings within experience. One's need for being orients a person toward a fulfillment beyond one's own internal world. At the heart of one's experience, in ontological exigence one is oriented toward an other.

Certain experiences revealed to Marcel the presence of transcendence in the midst of the real world. These experiences of transcendence are felt as internal experiences and

orient a person toward a realm beyond one's own inner world. Even within one's inner world, the feelings of transcendence reveal the presence of an other.

Reflection reveals to a person that he is in relation to all entities and the world itself. Even in the act of reflecting upon being, one participates in being—by thinking about being and by experiencing being as over-abounding one's full understanding. Marcel used another word, "recollection," to describe how a person reflected upon a situation as both subject and object of the reflection.

Marcel's responsive reflection, as dialogic praxes, involves one's attending to being in the world. In secondary reflection, one attends to the world as engaged participant in action. The person who practices secondary reflection responds to the world around him as a participating *being* in the world.

Summary

Marcel's point of entry to philosophy happened in his experiencing brokenness, uneasiness, and lack in the world. This brokenness appears as persons are reduced to their function or are addressed as abstract entities and feelings of existential uneasiness. Marcel approached the world with a belief in the world as meaningful. And Marcel saw at the heart of the person in the broken world a need for attending to being or an ontological exigence. He viewed one's awareness of and knowledge of being as happening through participation in being. Marcel viewed participation in being as involving both an active and receptive knowledge. Then, in addressing certain questions or situations, Marcel differentiated situations that are problems from situations that are mysteries. He also identified particular types of reflection, primary and secondary reflection, for addressing problems and mysteries distinctly. He further distinguished

recollection and intuition as particular ways of knowing the world. Finally, this chapter explored Marcel's sense of transcendence within experience. Marcel invited opening up understanding of experience to the possibility of encountering transcendence within that same human experience. Marcel maintained that interpretations of the broken world as revealing a need for being and a need for transcendence offer a valid and significant reflection on the world.

Experiencing the world as broken, Marcel found in reflection ways for encountering meaning within this world. He turned to the heart of this experience and found a need for being and transcendence within and beyond this world. His way of knowing the world was revealed as participant in being, part-active and part-receptive reflecting thinker bearing an intuition that one can encounter and is encountered by being in the world. In responsive reflection, one engages dialogic praxes, a being attending to and in open toward the world.

CHAPTER FOUR

Gabriel Marcel's Intersubjectivity: Attitudes for Dialogue

. In Marcel's response to persons participating in the broken world, he suggested that persons practice reflection as ameliorating praxes for making sense of life in the broken world. He described various types of reflection upon different situations that are problems or mysteries. One's interpretation of the world constitutes one's positioning toward the world. One is both positioned bodily in the world and in one's reflection about the world; one interacts toward and with the other persons in the world.

Marcel's philosophy blends together a concern for one's positioning in the world with interest in others, who are also present in this world. He described his own philosophy as centering upon "two interests which may at first seem contradictory. Latter is what I shall call the exigence of being; the first is the obsession *with beings* taken in their individuality but also affected by the mysterious relations which link them together" (*Creative Fidelity* 147). He attended to the particular being "taken in their individuality." But this person, Marcel noted, seemed "affected by the mysterious relations" woven into persons' ways of being together. What initially seemed to be contradictory interests of attending to an individual person or of studying the relations between the persons became a blended reflection upon intersubjectivity as ground for personal experience.

Marcel's concept of intersubjectivity integrates reflections on intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences. In perusing Marcel's work, I interpreted certain constructs to address a combination of issues. I use Marcel's term intersubjectivity to describe several topics Marcel addresses in his works. In this project, I attend to six dimensions of intersubjectivity: intersubjectivity includes invocations, being co-present, relating as I-

thou, availability and unavailability, creative fidelity, communion, and as nexus of existence. Marcel's description of intersubjectivity includes dialogic praxes in ways of being *with* and available *for* others.

This chapter addresses dimensions of Marcel's concept intersubjectivity. First, this chapter notes Marcel's description of invocations to recognize intersubjectivity. Second, Marcel's intersubjectivity is introduced as a becoming aware of being *co-present* and being *with* an other person. Third, his description of addressing the other person as a *thou* is summarized. Fourth, this chapter explores Marcel's relations of *availability* and *unavailability* that constitute praxes of response during intersubjective meeting. Fifth, Marcel's reflections on how co-present persons may experience *communication* and *communion* are discussed. Sixth, the practice of creative fidelity is explained. Seventh, Marcel's proposal that intersubjectivity as co-presence and being *with* forms a dialogic meeting in the heart of existence is offered. Eighth, this chapter suggests ways that Marcel's philosophy of intersubjectivity offers attitudes for dialogue.

Invocations to Recognize Intersubjectivity

One may physically *be* alongside other persons and not perceive that one *is with* the other who is an other person. Marcel contended that when one "recognized the deep, individual quality of somebody . . . true intersubjectivity arises" (*Mystery of Being* 1:178). The individual quality of somebody makes "invocations" and a "call upon another" (178). According to Marcel, the presence of an other makes a "call upon another." Marcel suggested that recognition of the "deep, individual quality of somebody" happened when one heard an invocation. This section identifies various invocations to recognize intersubjectivity that emerge in Marcel's descriptions of

experience. In bodily and mental orientations toward an other, persons are in relation to presence of others. During World War I, Marcel turned to attend to intersubjectivity. Calls to recognize intersubjectivity sound in experiences in one's life. One is woven in relationship with others from birth; feeling with others who also are bodies; naming self as distinct from other; and yearning for an other reality beyond a bodied, physical existence.

Calls to recognize intersubjectivity sound from one's birth. According to Marcel, one's sense of one's existence in the world reveals to the existing person that he is in the presence of other existents. In a bodily sense, one is born into a community and comes into existence in the presence of others (*Mystery of Being* 1). Marcel stated, "I am the incarnate reply to the reciprocal appeal between two beings" (*Homo Viator* 70). A person is born into existence as a reply to the relation between two beings. As early as 1914, Marcel reflected in his diary, "I am only a given person for myself through the mediating idea of the other for whom I am a given person" (*Metaphysical Journal* 145). One's reflection on one's own existence reveals an *I* directed to an interlocutor. In acknowledging that "I exist," one becomes aware of oneself as being given.

Marcel's description of one's sense of self signals the presence of others. One develops a sense of self through biological or social relations to people who teach a child to express an inner world through communication. As well, the child develops a sense of self in response to being recognized by others (*Homo Viator* 15). One's sense of uniqueness emerges in distinction from others. Marcel noted that one thought of the other person in distinction from oneself:

To think of somebody else is in a manner to affirm myself in face of this somebody else. To put it more accurately, the other is on the far side of the chasm, and there is no isthmus between us. But this chasm or separation is something that I only realize if I stop and stand outside myself—picture myself.

(Being and Having 152)

Thus, “somebody else” reveals to the reflecting subject a distance between the other and the subject. The other as separate from the subject reveals one’s self as in position with an other person. Marcel maintained that this chasm becomes known when one reflects upon oneself by taking an other’s position outside one’s own inner perspective. One develops a sense of self in the presence of others. As well, Marcel’s description of ontological exigence and transcendence that one feels at the root of one’s experience signals an orientation toward others.

One’s bodily, mental, and existential orientations toward an other reveal that one exists in the presence of others. Calls to recognize intersubjectivity sound amid experiences of transcendence and in concrete situations of being in relation to others. Intersubjective relations are felt as being *with* or co-present to other persons.

Being Co-Present and Being *With*

Marcel began many of his reflections on intersubjectivity with examples from encounters among persons in familial, social, or public settings. Intersubjectivity includes becoming aware of being *co-present* and being *with* an other person. The very experience of presence reveals being and mystery; is felt in relations to one’s body and existence; and thus, signals intersubjectivity. A person relates to the world as being-in-body and as being-in-situation. Because one is both *in* and *before* presence, one experiences presence

externally and internally Acknowledgment of presence reveals a relation of being *with* persons in a particularly interpersonal way. This section explores how the presence of the other is an invocation for being *with* as a relation of intimacy that is fundamental to dialogue.

The Experience of Presence

Marcel described presence and experiences of presence. He related *experiencing* presence to *knowing* being. In 1933, he wrote, “Being is granted to me as a presence or as a being (it comes to the same for he is not a being for me unless he is a presence)” (“Ontological Mystery” 38). One knows being through an experience of presence. He also claimed “presence is a reality” (38). Although Marcel contended that presence was not simply an idea one invents in the mind; he found defining the term *presence* challenging. However, he crafted his own explanatory description of presence.

Marcel suggested that one could not view presence as an object. One thinks about or relates to presence in a way that is distinct from relating to an object (*Mystery of Being* 1). He proposed that “in the case of a presence, the very possibility of grasping at, of seizing, is excluded in principle” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 208). He also described presence as that which “lies beyond the grasp of any prehension” (208). Presence cannot be captured as a category of an objective approach to reality.

Defining presence or universally experienced concepts like nature or person involves naming concepts that are experienced as “uncircumscribed” (“Ontological Mystery” 36). In attempting to define an elusive concept like presence, one enters a realm beyond circumscribed definitions, a realm of mystery (36). One approaches a description of presence as one approaches a description of mystery. According to Marcel, mystery

acts upon the person. He used similar explanations for presence, stating that presence, as a “kind of influx” acts upon a person (38). One acknowledges and is acted upon by presence. One participates in presence.

For Marcel, presence does not only mean being there, but also, presence is related to one’s “sense of existing, of being in the world” (*Homo Viator* 15). For Marcel, presence is experienced as the world makes itself felt to the experiencing subject (Ricoeur “Gabriel Marcel” 477). Presence is felt in relation to one’s own body: one feels the presence of one’s own body as being other than the subject. One is in the presence of one’s own body-as-other. Being *with* one’s own body also reveals a fundamental or intrinsic relation of being *with*. In the deepest relation, one’s relation to his own body, one is with.

In this sense, Marcel places understanding of presence beyond the realm of cognition or conscious perception. According to Marcel, presence cannot be grasped or possessed by a knowing subject, and in this way, presence cannot be objectified. Marcel distinguishes presence from an image or portrait. While a portrait offers a “likeness” to an object, presence “is *more* than the object” (“Ontological Mystery” 36). Treanor concluded that Marcel’s description of presence sets presence against the act of having or possessing: presence resists a relation of possession (69). Treanor found that for Marcel, “[P]resence is the hallmark of the *intersubjective*” (69). Subjects that cannot be possessed and that interact within one another signal intersubjectivity. Presence, as that which cannot be made an object, reveals subjects acting independently of the subject-self. Even the subject-self is disclosed as in relation to an unpossessable but relatable presence, which is also a subject-self. The experience of presence signals intersubjectivity.

Being in-the-Presence-of

Marcel viewed a person as always being in relation to the world. To be living or situated means “to be exposed to” or “permeable” to situations (*Creative Fidelity* 87). A being-in-situation is exposed to presences encountered in life. Because a person exists, he is in the world, in this body, in contact with or interfacing with being, existence, world, his own body, and other persons.

Marcel sees that being-in-a-body reveals aspects of being in relation to and with other beings-in-body. Various relations with others reveal different ways of being open or closed to the presence of others. Distinctions between relations of being or having, shape how one relates to other persons. As one relates to one’s own body through relations of being or having, one may also relate to others in similar ways.

How one feels oneself in a situation is similar to how one experiences oneself in the presence of someone or some thing. A person experiences presence felt in an internal way. As a person is exposed to presence through encounters with other phenomena, his encounters are not just external, spatially positioned meetings. According to Marcel, one experiences presence in a multidimensional way, both internally and externally:

When I say that a being is granted to me as a presence or as a being (it comes to the same for he is not a being for me unless he is a presence), this means that I am unable to treat him as if he were merely placed in front of me; between him and me there arises a relationship, which in a sense, surpasses my awareness of him; he is not only before me, he is also within me—or rather, these categories are transcended, they have no longer any meaning. (“Ontological Mystery” 38)

Marcel explored this relation as involving relations felt both internally and externally. When one is granted being as present in another person, one becomes aware of presence of that particular being. When one becomes aware of the other person-as-a-presence, one relates to the other person in an internal or intimate way. Acknowledging the presence of the other person reveals a relationship that cannot be described using spatial descriptors like *before*, *among*, or *within*.

So one might call this sense of the other's presence, an influx of presence, but even influx insinuates an internal-external dimension. One's mysterious relation to presence is experienced as both a relation to an external realm and a relation from an internal realm. Therefore, Marcel suggested that presence could be described as an "interior accretion, of accretion from within, which comes into being as soon as presence is effective" ("Ontological Mystery" 38). When one comes into contact with presence, one's acknowledgment wells up in response and one senses presence. This accretion arises within and a voice within says, "Even if I cannot see you, if I cannot touch you, I feel that you are with me; it would be a denial of you not to be assured of this" ("Ontological Mystery" 39). A person senses that the other is *with* him in person. A response from within signals that one is in relation to something or someone. From this experience of being-in-the-presence-of, intersubjective relation emerges.

Being *With*

In acknowledging the presence of someone, one becomes aware of being *with* another person. Marcel reflected, "[W]hen I think of a finite being, I restore, in a manner, between him and myself, a community, an intimacy, a *with*³⁰" (*Being* 31). As one

³⁰ Marcel used the French word "avec" which is translated as "with" into English. However, Marcel used the word *avec* to describe relations between persons. He did not use *avec* in his writings to mean "together"

acknowledges the presence of the other, one experiences being *with* the other as an intimate relation. Marcel described being *with* as being felt from within or internally. As one becomes aware of the presence of the other, the other “is not only before me, he is also within me” as an influx of being felt from within, as an “interior accretion” (“Ontological Mystery” 38). One’s response from within is a sense that one is *with* the other person.

One is with a person differently than one is with an object. Marcel differentiated interactions between a person-subject with an object and a person-subject with a person. He claimed that “relationships between things are external, relationships between people are internal” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 181). He offered an example to describe what he meant: “[W]hen I put the table *beside* the chair I do not make any difference to the table or the chair, and I can take one or the other away without making any difference” (181). Things may assemble in one place and not be in relation to one another. One relates to objects through external interactions.

Marcel argued that the word *with* applies to intersubjective meetings. People might be seated with other passengers on a train, and no relational dimension exists in this positioning (*Mystery of Being* 1: 180). For Marcel, a relation of being *beside* describes an external relationship between a subject and at least one object. A relation of being *with* indicates a relation beyond a subject-object relation. One sometimes uses the word *with* to describe relations that are not in actuality a being *with*. Marcel invited using *with* to describe how internal relationships are felt.

or “alongside”; those spatial relations were not comprehensive enough to indicate his ideas (*Mystery of Being* 1: 180).

In his introduction to his *Metaphysical Journal*, Marcel suggested that his reflections from 1919 on the meaning of the word *with* offered significant insight into his view of intersubjective relations. His 1919 reflection used *with* to describe how one feels united in some way to others who share the same physical or temporal situation. When a person feels united to others in the same situation, he is *with* the others (*Metaphysical* 170). Marcel clarified that feeling united means that between persons “there must be an appeal, an invocation, an ‘abide with me’ that is more or less clearly enunciated” (*Metaphysical* 170). Although Marcel used the auditory description, he described the experience as felt from within, as a mystery, a sense that one is with an other, who is an invocation.

Marcel specified that this sense of being *with* a person does not come to the person from strictly external nor internal sources. Being *with* me does not signal a “relationship of inherence or immanence, nor a relationship of exteriority” (“Ontological Mystery” 39). In this distinction from immanence, Marcel meant that this experience of a “with-me” relationship is not transmitted to the subject from external sources. In response to an external presence, one’s sense of being *with* springs up from within. While this invocation is heard, “the subject does not necessarily know that he hears it,” for the invocation is constituted as a “mysterious *co-esse*”³¹ (*Metaphysical Journal* 170). Marcel returned in 1933 to this discussion of “*co-esse*” calling this co-presence “genuine intimacy” (“Ontological Mystery” 39). He elaborated,

Even if I cannot see you, if I cannot touch you, I feel that you are with me; it would be a denial of you not to be assured of this. *With* me: note the metaphysical

³¹ Marcel noted, “I must use the Latin word” (“Ontological Mystery” 39). Because Marcel frequently italicized the word *co-esse*, I will also italicize this word.

value of this word, so rarely recognized by philosophers, which corresponds neither to a relationship of inherence or immanence nor to a relationship of exteriority. It is of the essence of genuine *coesse*” (“Ontological Mystery” 39). Marcel describes a relationship that is distinct from physical seeing and touching. One *feels* that the other is *with* oneself. In feeling that one is *with* the other person, one affirms the other person’s presence. Marcel distinguished the relationship of being *with* from other types of relationships. He does not describe being *with* another person as a “spiritual unity” between persons (Rodick 299). As well, Marcel stated that being *with* involves more than a relationship on the physical, exterior plane. Awareness of intimacy between, or *co-esse*, reveals the presence of an attitude *within*, or *between*, the intimate ones. Being *with* reveals a possibility for intimacy.

One discerns the meaning of presence through an act of communication. Marcel claimed that a subject experiences presence as “a kind of influx” that is felt when one “call[s] it forth” (“Ontological Mystery” 38). Marcel asserted “presence can, in the last analysis, only be invoked or evoked” (*Mystery* 208). Calling presence forth or invoking presence may mean acknowledging revelatory dimensions of presence. One comes into contact with presence or into intimacy with presence in a coming-before or feeling-to-be-with presence.

For Marcel, when one is in the presence of an other person, one becomes aware of—or recognizes—this phenomenon as presence. Ricœur explained that, for Marcel, this recognition of presence, of being with, was “not a modality of knowledge via object” but rather happened through experiences of love or fidelity (“Gabriel Marcel” 483-484). One does not come to this recognition of presence through intellectual investigation. One

becomes aware of being *with* an other person through experiences of love. Marcel proposed that one's primary ontological position is not an "I exist" or a "thou exists" but a "*co-esse*—the being with" (Ricœur 484). Being *with* an other constitutes a primary way one relates to the world. Thus, according to Ricœur, Marcel's significant insight was that "communication is constitutive of my very existence" (484). Recognition of presence involves affective experiencing of love not cognitive knowing of objects. In experiencing the presence of someone next to one, who is suffering an illness, one recognizes presence of the companion through an experience of loving accompaniment.

The presence of an other is an invocation to a person. Presence, as a "kind of influx," acts upon the person. Thus, one comes into the realm of presence. One can acknowledge the presence of an other. One participates *in* presence by being exposed to the other and through acknowledgment of the other. Participation in presence forms the ground for relationships. One is called into relationship of being *with*. One acknowledges that one is *with* the other person and an internal relationship emerges between them. One may be called forth by the presence of another. A sense of being *with* the other springs up from within the person. Co-esse reveals a shared sense of intimacy between the two persons, persons are co-present in an intimate way. At the heart of one's existence one finds oneself in the presence of an other. Thus, even in the most private of realms, the heart of existence, an invocation to intimacy as being *with* sounds. Being *with* signals possibilities for intimacy. These relations of intimacy are expressed in addresses of affection and regard.

Relating as I-thou³²

Marcel's attentiveness to an I-thou relation joined conversations of his historical moment. Although Martin Buber would be better remembered for his discussion on I-Thou relations published in 1923, already in 1915 in his *Metaphysical Journal*, Marcel was mentioning the difference between an I and thou and an I and he. In Marcel's 1967 reflection on Martin Buber's book *I and Thou*, first published in 1923. Marcel noted a "striking coincidence" that at the same time that Buber wrote his book, Marcel was also describing his own understanding of the human interrelations as oriented toward the other person as thou ("I and Thou" 41). Marcel suggested that he and Buber offered reflections on the I-thou relation within a shared historical milieu focused on defining and explicating scientific relations like I-It. Marcel reflected that philosophers like Ferdinand Ebner, Franz Rosenzweig, or Buber responded similarly to this shared milieu, considering the absence of or call for an other way of addressing the other person ("I and Thou" 41). Marcel described a relationship to thou in 1918 entry of his *Metaphysical Journal*, in 1935 *Being and Having*, in 1940 *Creative Fidelity*, and in 1951 *Mystery of Being: Reflection and Mystery*. Although Marcel addressed intersubjective relations as dealing with a thou, he asserted that Buber provided a much more thorough exposition on these relations.

A person relates to the other person as he or as a person addressed as thou. The way a person addresses an other person reveals ways of relating with the other. One's expectations for and experience of an intersubjective encounter shape the way one

³² Marcel frequently used the lower-cased thou for his description of a relation toward the other using a tone of respect. However, Marcel at times used a capitalized "Thou" when referring to relationships between persons (*Metaphysical Journal*). When Marcel referred to divine person as thou, he always capitalized, "Absolute Thou" (Treanor).

addresses the other participants in the encounter. A person chooses his address for the other and may change his particular address. Marcel offered understanding the other as person as a path to choosing the address of thou.

I-he and I-thou

One's view of the other persons shapes one's type of address, an I-he or an I-thou. Marcel emphasized that one's address of the other does not strictly confine the other to being a "he" or "thou" (*Being and Having* 105). However, one's particular address of the other does shape intersubjective relations between persons (*Being* 105-106). Marcel described the I-he and I-thou address through examples and philosophical reflections. Addressing the other through an I-he dynamic, the other is a "somebody, 'that person' in my eyes" (*Metaphysical Journal* 146). When one relates to the other as thou, one stands before the other as irreducibly other (*Being and Having* 107). As one *is* to the other through an I-he relation or an I-thou relation, one lays the ground for meeting or avoiding the other person.

In the scenario about the self-centered person entering the party, Marcel described what happens when someone approaches the self-centered person and tries to converse. The self-centered one thinks to himself, "Why is *he* talking to me? What is *he* after?" and maintains his guard, staying "on the defensive" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 177). These barriers or interior defenses, maintained by the self-centered person, prevent "a genuine encounter or conversation *with* him" (177). As the self-centered person wonders about the other as affecting his own world, the self-centered person "is not really *with* the other" (177). The way one addresses oneself shapes the way one addresses the others.

Depending on the possibility for an answer, the communicator selects the form of address: third or second person. Marcel suggested that one uses the second person when one knows the person is able to answer even if the person responds with “intelligent silence” (*Metaphysical Journal* 138). Tunstall observed that Marcel used the second person to address another person recognized as “fellow participant” in a shared situation (29). Marcel claimed, “[I]f no answer is possible there is only place for the ‘*him*’” (138). If the person does not expect a response, one uses the third person. Addressing the other using second person reveals ground for possible answers.

In treating the other as third person, one deals with the other as if he were absent. Marcel claimed that “it is his absence which allows me to objectify him,” to consider him as if he were an object presented to me (*Creative Fidelity* 32). In this sense, he, in third person, is dealt with as if he were no more than an object with which to exchange messages. Even if is bodily present next to someone, he could be absent, meaning he does not share his inner world with the other. Marcel suggested that when one says nothing, one treats the “interlocutor” as if he were not present as a being sharing the same situation (*Creative Fidelity* 71). A conversation in which one person does not share anything reduces the other person to something other than a co-present person.

Marcel recognized the possibility to relate to others by treating them like objects. Marcel called this treatment a scientific approach (Tunstall 28). Tunstall noted how Marcel’s scientific approach contrasts with an interpersonal approach. This contrast appears in how one addresses the other in second or third person. In Marcel’s 1918 diary entry, he noted that talking about “someone in the *third person*, I treat him as independent—as absent—as separate...I define him implicitly as external to a dialogue

that is taking place, which may be a dialogue with myself' (*Metaphysical Journal* 138). Treating a person in the third person, one creates distances between the persons, which may lead to objectification. Marcel claimed that if one treats the other "as a He, I reduce the other to being...an animated object which works in some way and not in others" (*Being and Having* 106-107). The other, who is addressed in the third person, becomes someone evaluated as an object.

Marcel countered this approach to the other as object with an approach to the other as thou. He noted that if one relates to the other in any way other than as thou, one reduces the other to one's idea or own definition of the other (*Being and Having* 107). Marcel countered this reductive attitude about the other with an "open" attitude toward the other: viewing the other as thou, "other *qua* other"³³ (107). One stands before the other *as* other. Addressing the other as thou, one stands before the other as irreducibly other (107). Seeing the other as thou, "I treat him and apprehend him *qua* freedom" (107). One stands before a thou who is free and irreducibly other. One who is irreducible is not to be confined to one's idea of the other. Thus, Marcel claimed "the other as other exists for me only insofar as I am open to him (insofar as he is a thou)" (qtd. in *Creative Fidelity* 72). While self-centered reduction closes one off to the other as being more than one's idea of the other, an attitude of thou opens one to the other as more than a mental construct. In this sense, one comes into the presence of other *qua* other.

Moving from I-he to I-thou

One might view the other as a stranger or as a person like him in some way. Marcel saw the stranger addressed in the third person *he*, and the person like me

³³ Marcel used the phrase: "*qua*" translated from Latin as "as". Some of the translations of Marcel's works maintain the Latin *qua* while other translations incorporate the English "as."

addressed as *thou*. He reflected on the transition from relating as I-him to I-thou. He gave the example of a person sitting next to a stranger on the train. The more that the stranger spoke to the person, sharing not about the weather nor about war news but about his own personal history, something happened in the relation. As the person became aware of the stranger as “somebody” particular, he became aware of himself as “somebody else” (*Metaphysical Journal* 146). He described how this situation could include the stranger “communicating himself to me by signs³⁴ which coincide with signs of mine, and that is all” (146). In this particular context, a coincidence of signs indicates understanding the words the other one says. Marcel noted that, as well, while speaking to the stranger on the train, one might actually be only internally dialoguing with oneself.

But something might shift in this interchange. The stranger could become “less and less an object for me,” and “his or her presence is such that I am less and less *him* for myself—my interior defenses fall at the same time as the barriers that separate me from somebody else” (*Metaphysical Journal* 147). Marcel also stated that “outer defenses fall at the same time as the walls separating me from the other person fall” (*Creative Fidelity* 33). As defenses fall, one also discovers aspects of oneself (*Creative Fidelity* 33). In this change, the participants shift from being “‘somebody’ and ‘somebody else.’ We become simply ‘us’” (*Metaphysical Journal* 146). One shifts from sharing news in the same language with “somebody” (I-he) on the train to sharing aspects of oneself in the presence of someone one who is “somebody else” (I-thou).

Although one may address the other by using the word, “you,” one is actually treating the other “pragmatically” as if the other he were an “It” (*Mystery of Being* 1:

³⁴ In one of his reflections, he equated signs with symbols (*Metaphysical Journal* 138). He suggested, “everything that is communicated by signs emanates from a source” (175).

179). Marcel gave the example from his experience of needing directions from a stranger on the street and having addressed the stranger based on the stranger's usefulness to him. Marcel suggested that if the stranger "put[s] himself as it were in my shoes, he has come within my reach as a person," and then some form of intersubjectivity might emerge (179). The stranger relating to Marcel pauses, takes his time, and speaks in a cordial tone. Being addressed in this way, Marcel recounts feeling "as if I had stepped out of a wintry day into a warm room" (179). An unexpected encounter with a stranger who shifts the interaction from usefulness to sincere attention becomes an experience of intersubjectivity.

Returning again to Marcel's story of the self-centered party-goer, a shift may also happen in the way participants are addressed. In the conversation, a shared past experience may be discovered (*Creative Fidelity* 33). Then, the self-centered party-goer realizes that he also knows someone the other person knows. A connection happens, or a "bond of feeling" emerges between the communicators, and the two "become *we*, and this means that he ceases to be *him* and becomes *thou*" (*Creative Fidelity* 33). The self-centered one stops focusing on himself; "he is lifted out of that stifling here-and-nowness" of his ego, and the tension eases (*Mystery of Being* 1: 178). Both conversants talk about someone known by both and share a mutual appreciation for a friend. Marcel suggested that in shared appreciation of something outside each person, "true intersubjectivity arises" (178). By sharing knowledge of a third party, the self-centered one becomes capable of rising above his inner world and coming into an intersubjective encounter.

Marcel connected secondary reflection upon oneself with understanding the other person as thou. In this secondary reflection one reflects upon his own self implicated in the situation. Thus, as one reflects upon others or self in a situation, one may become cognizant of phenomena present in the situation that were otherwise unseen. Marcel encouraged ongoing reflection as praxes for relating to the world and others in the world.

Reflection upon situations may lead one to feeling more *like* the other. Marcel gave the example of a person feeling disappointed in a friend for some behavior. The person distances himself from the friend in judgment. But then the person calls to mind an action in his own past when he behaved in a way similar to his friend. The person asks: How is my past behavior *like* my friend's current behavior, and how can I consider "myself as qualified to judge and eventually condemn" the other for his behaviors (*Mystery of Being* 1: 80)? Based on this secondary reflection, the person thinks, "I am now able to enter into far more intimate communication with my friend, since between us there no longer stands that barrier which separates the judge on the bench from the accused man in the dock" (80). A reflection upon how one is *like* a person allows the other person to move from an object of judgment to a co-present thou.

Choosing One's Address for the Other

Marcel further described this other *qua* other as an indication of one's freedom. One of the aspects of being a person includes having choices about how one acts. The body is how one has the power to act and possibly to take a position toward the other (*Tragic Wisdom*). Freedom involves a possibility for differing attitudes or ways of positioning oneself toward the other. One is free to treat the other person as object or as thou. Marcel wrote, "When one "treat[s] the other as 'Thou', [one] treat[s] him and

apprehend[s] him *qua* freedom” (*Being and Having* 106–107). Thus, when one is treated as thou, one’s freedom to position oneself as one chooses is respected. Treating the other as thou means deferring to the other the freedom to act and be in the world as he pleases. The people surrounding someone “help him, in a sense, to be freed, [they] collaborate with his freedom” (*Being* 107). One’s freedom emerges in intersubjective encounters.

In being free to act toward the other in various ways, one also bears responsibility for one’s choice of action. One owns one’s choice for treating the other as object or thou as something to be possessed or someone to be acknowledged. Marcel contended that a “mark of the person” is that “I am conjointly responsible to both myself and to everyone else” (*Homo Viator* 21). Marcel connected responsibility also to community in a relation of indebtedness. One is born into a community having received one’s language and one’s sense of self (*Mystery of Being* 1: 200). In another text, Marcel stated that every person’s situation in the world reveals a balance sheet in which one’s “debts” far outweigh one’s “assets” (*Homo Viator* 141). One is born into a world indebted to other persons. Treanor concluded from Marcel’s statement that to be a human person means “to be indebted” to others (96). One and one’s actions *are* in response to others.

Intersubjectivity includes addressing the other person as I-he or I-thou. When the other seems absent or is absent, the subject selects the I-he address for communicating. When one is in the presence of the other as other, one chooses the address of regard and respect, an I-thou. Although a person, because he is free, chooses his address for the other, he may change his understanding of the other and his way of addressing the other. One also addresses the other through attitudes toward or extended for the other person. Marcel suggested that these attitudes appeared as *availability* and *unavailability*.

Availability and Unavailability

Marcel's relations of *availability* and *unavailability* constitute praxes of response in intersubjective meeting. Intersubjectivity includes positions toward the other person and being open or closed to sharing oneself with the other. The available one is present with and to the other while the unavailable one is closed off from the other. The available one has resources to extend toward the other person and is available as a gift. Modern experiences of alienation from the other person signal an invocation for availability.

Marcel used the French words *disponibilité* and *indisponibilité* to describe these positions and ways of being with others in the world. *Disponibilité* translates into English as availability or disposability. *Indisponibilité* translates as unavailability or non-disposability.³⁵ Throughout his works, Marcel offered philosophical descriptions of *disponibilité*. Marcel, bilingual in French and English, suggested that the English term availability did not fully describe what he meant by the philosophical phrase *disponibilité* (*Mystery of Being* 1: 163). In his lectures in English, he would frequently use the French word *disponibilité* and describe what he meant by the phrase. However, this dissertation uses the translations *availability* and *unavailability* and offers Marcel's general descriptions of the terms.

Open or Closed to the Other Person

Marcel's concepts of *availability* and *unavailability* are ways that one is open or closed to the other person and given or withheld from the other person. Otto Friedrich Bollnow contended that Marcel introduced his concept of availability to philosophy beginning in 1930 and continued to reflect on the concept throughout his work (182). Joe

³⁵ The translator for *Being and Having: An Existentialist Diary*, Katherine Farrar, used the words "disposability/ nondisposability" for the word *disponibilité* / *indisponibilité*.

McCown, in his detailed description *Availability: Gabriel Marcel and the Phenomenology of Human Openness*, suggested that Marcel viewed availability as an attitude. McCown noted that Marcel's availability included a positioning toward or a way of being before and toward the other person. Availability and unavailability are attitudes invoked by presence. The presence in the other person invites a response. One may respond by recognizing the presence of the other person, by sharing one's own self with the other, by not acknowledging the presence of the other, or by withholding one's self from the other. Differing views of self and of the other shape ways of being available or unavailable to the others. Unavailability and availability reveal and are rooted in one's relation toward the other.

The available one is present with and to the other. Marcel gave the example of when someone is in pain or needs someone to talk to, where "there are some people who reveal themselves as 'present'—that is to say, at our disposal" ("Ontological Mystery" 39). Yet, someone may be physically present, listening to the other person, and not actually be available to the other person. This unavailable person "gives me nothing, he cannot make room for me in himself, whatever the material favors he is prepared to grant me" (40). A person may give material things or even time but remain unavailable, withholding or safeguarding himself (40). The available listener, however, listens in an open way, communicating presence through "a look, a smile, an intonation, or a handshake" (40). Pietro Prini noted that Marcel's description of availability meant that an available one participates in an "'unveiling' of Being" (qtd. in McCown 4). By being present to the other, the available one witnesses the presence of being in the other person.

An available one is witness to presence of others around him and acknowledges the others' presence as real.

The available one recognizes that he is in the presence of an other person. An available person is before a particular person. Before a particular person, the available one is not thinking abstractly that he should treat people in a certain way; he is present to and "at the disposal of" the concrete person before him ("Ontological Mystery" 41). In being at the disposal of the person before him, an available person is also open to the presence of the other. The available one is not "self-contained; on the contrary such a being is open and exposed" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 145). He does not fence off realms of self but remains exposed to the presence of an other. As the one available for others chooses to be toward the other, he chooses to forfeit his "right to dispose freely of himself" (*Being and Having* 184, 226). He opens himself and his inner world to be shared with the other person. Marcel stated that availability is "the act by which I expose myself to the other person instead of protecting myself from him, which makes him penetrable for me at the same time as I become penetrable for him" (*Creative Fidelity* 36). Marcel saw availability as ground for intersubjectivity. In this way, an available person dwells in the presence of the others, on a ground not his own, vulnerable to the presence of the other.

In distinction from the unfenced ground extended by an available person, the unavailable one remains closed off from the people around him. Absorbed with oneself, the unavailable one is not aware of the presence of other people. The unavailable one is "encumbered with one's own self"; weighed down by one's own concerns; unable to acknowledge a presence of the other beyond the self-centered realm ("Ontological

Mystery” 42). One may be concerned with one’s health or one’s fortune (42). Marcel suggested that an accompanying “anxiety grows” alongside these concerns “to the point of choking [her]” (42). Because the unavailable person views his life as “quantifiable, as capable of being wasted, exhausted, or dissipated,” he is all the more anxious about having his life infringed upon by others (*Creative Fidelity* 54). So the preoccupied one erects a “mechanism of self-defense” to protect one’s calculated resources (“Ontological Mystery” 42). This anxiety and self-concern connect to a “state of inner inertia,” which may result in one feeling frozen by fear, pessimism, or a lack of hope (*Creative Fidelity* 54). Unavailability appears in a self-laden neighbor who is closed in by his own protective fences and deaf to the presence of others.

These barriers around one’s inner world, to protect one’s own health or fortune, reveal territories of the unavailable self who does not engage intersubjective relationships with other people. The self has turned in on itself, becoming ego-centric. As a person becomes “burdened” by oneself, one “feel[s] an empty void and crav[es] to be confirmed from outside, by another” (*Homo Viator* 16). The unavailable self is only oriented toward the other person so as to receive from him. The unavailable one seeks confirmation from the other but does not extend acknowledgement of the other as other. Although he engages some interactions with others, he does so in an ego-centric way.

In an ego-centric way, the unavailable one assesses the others in their usefulness to him. Self-centered, he views the other as “at my disposal” or as one to be disposed of (“Ontological Mystery” 40). Viewing the other as “at my disposal” means that the unavailable one relates to the other in a relation of possession of or power over (40). One views the other as less-than or as an object to be disposed of. This relation of

objectification reveals a distancing between the unavailable subject and the other person as object.

Having Resources for the Other

Marcel's description of availability also indicated having resources and having these resources at-hand. Because the English translation of availability did not address this aspect of *disponibilité*, Marcel proposed sometimes translating *disponibilité* as "handiness and unhandiness, the basic idea being that of having or not having, in a given contingency, one's resources to hand or at hand" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 163). Having one's resources at hand means being capable of sharing one's inner resources. Sometimes Marcel called this having inner resources at hand having credit. In a 1922 entry in *Metaphysical Journal*, Marcel described relating to another person as a thou means one's attitude toward the other involves extending "credit," or trust, toward the other (283). One does not doubt the other person; one believes that the other is trustworthy, and thus one extends "credit" that "is open and unconditional" (283). In his 1933 reflection on availability, Marcel returned to this monetary metaphor for extending oneself toward an other person. He distinguished the available one from the unavailable one in terms of credit:

It will perhaps be made clearer if I say the person who is at my disposal is the one who is capable of being with me with the whole of himself when I am in need; while the one who is not at my disposal seems merely to offer me a temporary loan raised on his resources. For the one I am a presence; for the other I am an object. ("Ontological Mystery" 40)

A person who is at one's disposal extends himself to the other without conditions or expectations for repayment. The unavailable one relates to others expecting remuneration. Marcel connected this unconditional extension of being to an other person to being present with one another. The intersubjective relationship emerges as a being co-present to one another. The temporary loan of self to the other reveals a person who relates to the other person as an object receiving my loan. A relation of objectification stymies an intersubjective relationship from emerging.

Marcel deepened his description of availability by expanding upon the dimension of gift. As one extends "credit to another, he is making a gift of himself]" because the giver extends confidence to the other and believes that the other will receive the gift (*Mystery of Being* 2: 118). A gift of self is not a type of "transfer" of material or relational goods, for which some will have to respond; "to give is not to seduce" (118). A gift is not given so as to persuade or to invoke a response. One gives a gift "to expand, to expand oneself," which Marcel cautioned should not be linked to expansion of material possessions but to expand oneself through generosity with others (118). If one extends gifts to others and then enjoys the feeling of giving, this giving "degenerates into complacent self-satisfaction" (119). Instead of giving as a being toward and with the other person, one gives so as to satisfy oneself. Marcel noted that generosity infusing the giving of gifts appears inexplicably in a person. He claimed that "generosity, however, seems itself to be a gift" (120). Marcel noted that generosity toward others does not seem to be the result of one's own work as gift generosity "arises spontaneously" (120). Acknowledging that an attitude is itself a gift reveals an attitude of humility.

Alienation From or Availability With

Marcel connected unavailability to alienation. For example, before another person who is suffering, the unavailable one reports, “I feel absolutely nothing” and remains indifferent to the situation of the other (“Ontological Mystery” 41). Unavailability, as an incapacity to sympathize with others, “is rooted in some measure of alienation” (40).

Alienation from the other person reveals separation from the other person. Keen described this alienation as a modern “dis-ease,” an unease of the modern person who is ill-at-ease in the world due to alienation from self, neighbor, or even from one’s own body (36).

Surrounded by modern attitudes of self-attention and self-sufficiency, Marcel noted the need for, and yet, rare appearance of, the posture of availability (*Mystery of Being* 1). The unavailable one draws strength from oneself. He conditions actions toward others by expecting remuneration and relates to others as people who draw on his resources. “Encumbered by self,” he feels anxieties about diminishing resources even within his own self.

In contrast to unavailability as alienation, availability is a form of listening to the other person. Bugbee connected Marcel’s availability to a way of listening or being active and passive in engaging with others. One participates in availability being with and for the other person by blending active and passive engagement (Bugbee). Bugbee described Marcel’s availability as participation through twofold receptivity through both reflexive and directed receptivity (85). Availability is reflexive when one remains actively open to “being unconditionally claimed” (Bugbee 84). When one is claimed, one may be acted upon by the claims of other people. Availability is “directed” because one “heeds” or

listens attentively to the claims of the other people (Bugbee 84). In being attentive to the other person as having a claim over one's own life, one is *with* others in both passive and active ways. The available one is open to hearing the other as a call for response and ready to extend a response. Therefore, one participates in availability being given the gift to be toward the other and actively sharing the gift through openness to others.

Gift of Hospitality as Room for the Other

When one has room for the other person, one may extend oneself as gift. Marcel described this gift as a gift of hospitality. One has room when one is exposed to the other and responds. In situation with others, one is in contact with others around him. As noted, a person's "condition as a living being...exposes him to, or better, opens him up to a reality with which he somehow communicate[s]" (*Creative Fidelity* 88). As a living being, one is exposed to or in contact with other persons and chooses to be open to or closed from others sharing the same situation. Marcel described this attitude toward the other as having room for the other within. The one who is self-absorbed has no room for others within. This person is "completely absorbed in [her]self, concentrated on [her] own sensations, feelings, anxieties, it will obviously be impossible for [her] to receive, to incorporate into [her]self, the message of the other" (*Creative Fidelity* 88).

The one who is open to recognition of persons remains ready to communicate with others. Before selecting one's message for communication, before trying to converse, or even finding the same language to be understood by the other person, "I must somehow make room for the other in myself" (*Creative Fidelity* 88). Recognizing the presence of being with other persons opens a person to accompanying the other. The available person is before *this* particular person. Resisting closing up in self, the person,

in praxes of availability, opens himself up to the other person, and a ground for communication emerges.

As the person opens himself up to the other person, he is receptive to the presence of the other person. Marcel suggested that the one who is “at home with self” has the capacity to open oneself to receive others (*Creative Fidelity* 27). Thus receptivity for, availability for the other, involves an “act of hospitality,” which does not mean “fill up a void with an alien presence, but to make the other person participate in a certain plenitude” (*Creative Fidelity* 28). Receiving the presence of the other involves “readiness” or a “gift of *self*, of the person who is involved in the act of hospitality” (*Creative Fidelity* 89, 91). The hospitable one opens up oneself to others, sharing the “gift of what is one’s own” (*Creative Fidelity* 28).

Room *for* the presence of the other opens ground for being *with*. Being *with*, feeling *with*, and being available *for* offer openings to encounter fulfilling meetings along the way. The possibility for communion in communication may emerge as a joyful surprise.

Experiences of availability and unavailability reveal characteristics of Marcel’s philosophy of intersubjectivity. When participants in relationships with others are absent or unavailable to others, alienation is experienced. Availability implies extending oneself toward the other without expecting repayment. Attitudes of availability foster creative intersubjective exchanges and are themselves experienced as gifts.

Creativity Fidelity

Marcel’s description of availability involved having a capacity to be for or give oneself to the other. From his earliest reflections on availability/unavailability, he

connected this concept of being *for* others to being *committed to* others. If one adapted the position of availability, one could promise to remain available for the other in the future. Marcel contended that even when one no longer felt like being available for the other one would override that feeling because of one's promise to be available (*Being and Having* 41,43). Yet, persons ask themselves if they will be faithful to that promise in the future. Marcel called this a problem of constancy in practicing availability (*Creative Fidelity*). One makes a promise to be available for the other person, but one is uncertain if one can in fact keep that promise.

Marcel proposed practicing creative fidelity as a way of addressing this problem. When one makes a commitment to another person, "I grant in principle that the commitment will not again be put into question" (*Creative Fidelity* 162). Then when one experiences a change in how one feels about what one committed, one is faced with an option: to go back on one's promise or to remain faithful to the promise. One practices creative fidelity by "refusing to put into question the ground of commitment" (163). One does not refuse to think about the commitment, but one calls to mind the persons involved in the commitment.

Practicing creative fidelity means recognizing the permanent presence of the other person and in that presence remaining faithful to one's promises. Marcel contended that when one is before a presence of a person or a beautiful scene one is inspired to create ("Ontological Mystery"). When one stands before another person and first of all makes a promise, one is inspired to create, to make the promise. Then, over time, when one questions one's capacity to keep one's promise to another person, if one calls to mind the permanent presence of being in the other person one is moved to renew one's promise.

Marcel viewed faithfulness as an “active recognition of something permanent” (“Ontological Mystery” 35). One recognizes the presence of the other as a permanent, ongoing presence. He differentiated creative fidelity from fidelity as a Kantian duty to a principle. Creative fidelity involves an engaging, ongoing effort to respond to a “living presence” (35). Fidelity is not a commitment to a past way of being. For Marcel, “fidelity [was] only safeguarded by being creative” (*Being and Having* 96). A fidelity that is creative involves recognizing the presence of the other person. Creative fidelity to a particular person and/or promise is experienced in each moment in new ways.

When one experiences doubts about one’s commitment, one is free to practice creative fidelity or not. One may call to mind a promise or the person and acknowledge an ongoing presence connecting one to the other. In creative fidelity, one chooses to believe in the person anew and accept one’s committed positioning toward the other. In creative fidelity, one hopes in oneself to be present in commitments and in availability over time (*Creative Fidelity*). Creative fidelity is intersubjective praxes. As one assumes positions toward the others in the world, possibilities for communication emerge.

Communication: Coming into Communion With

In moments of co-presence, participating persons may communicate and experience communion. Marcel noted that the world he understood as broken was marked by increased individualism, feelings of alienation and isolation (“I and Thou” 42). One could “break the circle of his solitude in a specific transforming encounter” (“I and Thou” 42). An opening to transform solitude emerged as one encountered an other. David Rodick proposed that Marcel did not describe intersubjective meetings to mean a “unity” of the two experiences (294). Rodick suggested that Marcel meant that the

intersubjective encounter was “*between* them in a most exact sense, in dimension accessible to them alone” (294). A *between* emerged as ground accessible to participants in encounter.

Marcel described proximity in shared situations and feelings of absence or presence of the other persons as settings for possible communication. Participants may experience intersubjective encounters as communion, shared experiences of being *with* the other or of being co-present. As well, intersubjectivity may emerge in affectivity.

Coming into Communication

In describing the I-thou relation in 1918, Marcel addressed what occurs when the one questioning meets the one answering. As two persons engage in discussion as a Platonic dialectic, they share “signs or symbols” and “between the question and the answer there must be a meeting ground which, if not selected, is at least accepted...by the question” (*Metaphysical Journal* 138). Marcel noted that a question that is asked “through the medium of a *thou*” is a “coming into communication with” someone’s broader experience (140). Marcel recognized communication as sharing of signs, questioning and answering upon a meeting ground. The questioning happens as an “I” addresses a *thou*.

In his 1950 Gifford Lectures, Marcel highlighted experiences of communication as signs of co-presence between persons. He described two contrasting scenarios in which an experience of co-presence was missing and an experience of co-presence happened. In the first scenario, Marcel described a scene in which two persons sat beside each other in the same room. As persons sharing a physical space, he argued that “merely physical, communication is possible; the image of passing of messages between a

reception point and an emission point” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 205). Merely physical communication resembles communication as transmission.³⁶ Marcel goes on to suggest that this is *not* real communication:

Yet something essential is lacking. One might say that what we have with this person, who is in the room, but somehow not really present to us, is communication without communion: unreal communication, in a word. He understands what I say to him, but he does not understand *me*: I may even have the extremely disagreeable feeling that my own words, as he repeats them to me, as he reflects them back to me, have become unrecognizable. By a very singular phenomenon indeed, this stranger interposes himself between me and my own reality, he makes me in some sense also a stranger to myself; I am not really myself while I am with him. (*Mystery of Being* 1: 205)

Even as the two persons are communicating, something is lacking. Marcel called this missing experience *communion*. In this passage, to understand the one who speaks opens a possibility for communion. When this understanding of the one speaking the words is missing, one feels a barrier between persons, and even between oneself and the words one has spoken. A lack of co-understanding leads to alienation between persons and alienation from one’s own words. Feeling alienated even from oneself, one feels like a stranger while attempting to communicate with the other person.

The person “somehow not really present to us” is absent to his neighbor. One may experience a physically present—but experientially absent—person as “far further away

³⁶ Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver described communication as a process involving transmitting information. The communication system includes an “information source” selecting a message, “the transmitter changes the message into the signal which is actually sent over the communication channel from the transmitter to the receiver” (7).

from us” than someone who is actually thousands of miles away (*Mystery of Being* 1: 205). Absence, felt as lack of presence among persons, creates alienation interpersonally and intra-personally. Words—spoken in the absence of an other person—confuse; sounds are unfamiliar; and understanding cannot emerge.

Marcel described the possibility for a distinct experience of being physically in the same room with another person when co-presence is experienced. He wrote, “When somebody’s presence does really make itself felt, it can refresh my inner being; it reveals me to myself, it makes me more fully myself than I should be if I were not exposed to its impact” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 205). The experience of the same situation, sitting in the same room together, is no longer “communication without communion” (205). While the two persons are physically present, they are also now manifesting presence one-to-the-other. Both persons are open to this experience of the other’s presence upon him. Presence reveals being to being, as one becomes aware of being *with*. Marcel described the person who becomes aware of the presence of an other as himself more aware of *who he is* in relation to the other-as-being.

Marcel differentiated this experience of co-presence from an experience of communicative transmission. Differing types of communication happen in each scenario:

The communion in which presences become manifest to each other, and the transmission of purely objective messages, do not belong to the same realm of being; or rather...all transmission of objective messages takes place, if we may so put it, before we have yet reached the threshold of being. (*Mystery of Being* 1: 207)

The communion felt between co-present participants stands in distinction from communication happening as transmission of messages. Marcel viewed transmission of objective messages as dealing with realms not including experiences of presence or being. The experience of communion of presences is an experience of *co-esse*. In his 1959 reflection *Presence and Immortality*, Marcel again described this scenario about two persons in a room. He added this clarification, “it is not so much what the other says, the content of his words which exercises on me this stimulating action, but it is *he himself saying these words*” (256). His presence in the situation “exercises” or acts upon the other person.

Marcel contrasted objective approaches with spiritual or transcendent approaches attentive to being. He had also called dealing with the other person in the third person an approach to the person as object (*Metaphysical Journal*). But when communicators are co-present to one another, a communion of presence is possible.

Communion

Marcel used the word *communion* as a contrast for *transmission*. In his 1919 diary entry, Marcel first used the word communion in his discussion of whether one could identify presence as a spiritual dimension in an other person. He noted, in his informal diary reflection, one identifies presence or spiritual dimensions in an other person through communion not through transmission (*Metaphysical Journal*). At a much later date, 1950, in his Gifford Lectures, Marcel again distinguished transmission of messages from “communion of presence” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 207). While messages may be transmitted, spiritual dimensions and presence are communicated through communion. Marcel also noted that interpersonal encounters happen within “an atmosphere of real

intimacy that cannot be compared to an exchange of signals between an emission point and a reception post” (182). Intimate encounters differ from exchange of messages.

Communion happens amid experiences of being *with* or co-presence. In his 1919 diary entry, he first used the word “communion” followed by the parenthetical comment: “communion (I am looking for an equivalent of *Mitsein*)”³⁷ (*Metaphysical Journal* 163). Though not explicitly, Marcel connected communion to being *with* and identifying presence in another person. Although he did not ever offer a clear definition of communion, he sometimes connected communion with communication. As already noted, he described “communion in which presences become manifest to each other” and communion as a mutual understanding between communicators (*Mystery of Being* 1: 205, 207). One is aware of and acknowledges the presence of the other person and mutual understanding of the other as person emerges.

Communion involves a meeting, a fusion, a co-presence. One’s own sense of self, “while yet remaining separate, has fused into the living unity he now forms with me. The path leading from dialectic to love has now been opened” (*Creative Fidelity* 33). In this fusion experienced as communion, Marcel described an “indistinctness of the I and thou,” which “does not imply the existence of a neutral environment in which one can lose oneself and abdicate” (*Creative Fidelity* 35). In this unity formed between persons, one does not lose one’s sense of being one’s own person.

³⁷ Joe McCown noted that Marcel perhaps included, in later publications of *Metaphysical Journal*, this parenthetical reference to Heidegger’s term *Mitsein*, which loosely translated means “with-being” or “being with.” (McCown 39)

Communion involves more than a physical person-to-person meeting. In the communion of presence, a sharing happens that does not eliminate the independent persons.³⁸ Marcel described relationships that brought two people together:

Unification need not be thought of a subsuming of persons, into both. In love, *eros*, we seek to unite and merge beings. *Agape*³⁹ transcends fusion. Would the Highest unity not be one created between beings capable of recognizing each other as different, but loving one another in their very difference? Such a unity lies at the opposite pole from any attempt at reduction: for reduction robs the reduced components of certain specific, differentiating qualities. (*Mass Society* 164)

In loving relationships, persons experience unification with the other person. Marcel gave the example of *eros*, or romantic love, in which the persons experience a desire to be united to the beloved. *Agape*, or an unconditional love pointing to the Christian sense of transcendence, goes beyond a mutual sharing or fusion of persons to access a transcendent realm. Marcel then proposed that “the Highest unity” allows participants to recognize one another as different. Thus, both persons meeting in “Highest unity” are not reduced through being treated as an object to be subsumed by the other. Marcel’s concept of “Highest unity” has been connected to his description of communion (McCown, Treanor). In a diary entry from 1919, he described “communication means being oneself—while the someone else remains himself” (*Metaphysical Journal* 190). An

³⁸ Treanor offers a thorough study of Marcel’s sense of communion as distinct from Emmanuel Levinas’ understanding of communion. Addressing Levinas’ and Marcel’s distinct understanding of universality, Treanor suggested that because Marcel viewed persons as “capable of unity without being susceptible to totality” so even the closest intimate relations were not a union but a communion (101).

³⁹ The Greek word *Agape* is commonly translated into English as a type of love that bears divine dimensions. The word is linked to Christian descriptions of love as distinct from love that is affectionate or erotic (Oxford English Dictionary).

aspect of being co-present includes still “being oneself” in the relationship. Marcel’s sense of communion involves participating persons who are united with one another and still separate persons.

Marcel’s concept of communion also included participating in spiritual or mysterious realms. Marcel described communion using *union*, *co-presence*, or *spiritual unity* (*Against Mass Society*). Roger Troisfontaines proposed that Marcel’s concept of participation included a level called “ontological communion” (45). Ontological communion in Marcel’s work means one participates in a “spiritual universe” through “sensory receptiveness” and availability (45-46). McCown expanded upon this spiritual dimension in Marcel’s communion by stating “participation in the mystery of being is through communion” (50). Communion involves acknowledging presence of being and spiritual dimensions in the other person.

Marcel started many of his reflections on intersubjectivity in experiences of love. These experiences of love, sounding as promises of being forever faithful or to love for all eternity, signaled transcendent dimensions:

There is no human love worthy of the name which does not represent for him who exercises it both a pledge and a seed of immortality; but on the other hand, it is really not possible to exercise this love without discovering that it cannot constitute a closed system, that it passes beyond itself in every direction, that it really demands for its complete realization a universal communion outside which it cannot be satisfied and is destined to be corrupted and lost in the end.

Moreover, this universal communion can only be centered on an absolute Thou.
(*Homo Viator* 152)

Love signals, even to non-believers, a realm beyond this world, a promise of realization and communion in a “beyond” (*Homo Viator* 152). Love sounds full of pledges as promises to continue loving. Love bears a “seed of immortality” in its promising an unknown or uncertain future. Marcel described the death of a loved one and suggested that the relation one has with the absent loved one contains some promise of immortality (*Creative Fidelity* 72). In the quote above, Marcel then grounded love in an opening toward the other, not as a closing off. Experiences of love include a “pass[ing] beyond itself in every direction” as if even this relationship cannot contain the love experienced for the other person. Marcel found this possibility for feeling united to the loved one and others in a universal communion could only withstand corruption by being grounded in an “absolute Thou.” For Marcel, an absolute Thou invoked persons into interpersonal relations and continued to call forth receptive and participating responses.

When persons share situations, communication may emerge. Feeling that the other is absent to the situation creates a barrier for communication. Awareness of the presence of the other as sharing a situation offers ground for communication. Coming into communication with the other person and acknowledging one another as co-present in a situation, persons may understand one another and feel one another as being *with*, united with, “we are” in communion. Through experiences of communication and love, Marcel arrived at a characteristic for existence. Existence is shaped by communicative meetings.

Intersubjectivity as Nexus of Existence

A dialogic meeting is possible when two people are intersubjectively co-present. For Marcel, intersubjectivity is nexus of existence. “The intersubjective nexus” is

experienced not as an asserted proposition but as a screen upon which that-which-is-given appears (*Mystery of Being* 2: 11). Marcel thus concluded, one could not *assert* the presence of an intersubjective nexus at the heart of existence; rather, “[I]t can only be acknowledged” (10). Marcel did not make definitive statements about intersubjectivity as the nexus of experience and existence, but he acknowledged intersubjectivity as ground for all relations in the world. Marcel acknowledged but did not definitively assert that intersubjectivity constitutes the nexus of existence.

In his dramatic and philosophical reflections, Marcel revealed his belief that intersubjective relationships shape the heart of existence. For Marcel, “theater is the very struggle [of life] not spoken but produced” (“Gabriel Marcel” 486). Thus, through his plays, he explored dimensions of his philosophy of intersubjectivity. In his play *The Broken World*, Marcel described Christiane, the main character, seeking to understand her own decisions, desires, and discontent in life. Christiane was blocked from understanding herself until she met and conversed with another character who spoke to her about the past. Years after producing the play, Marcel reflected that Christiane represents a common experience: life events estrange persons from “their own underlying depths,” and one needs “the mediation of somebody else” to help one to understand one’s own depths (*Mystery of Being* 1: 169). In the presence of an other person, one may choose to reveal one’s own depths.

Marcel stood in distinction from other philosophical reflections upon intersubjective relationships. Marcel acknowledged Sartre’s famous phrase in *Huis-Clos* “Hell—that’s other people” (qtd. in *Mystery of Being* 2: 9). Marcel contested Sartre’s negative description of the interpersonal relationship and suggested that Sartre must not

have been accounting for experiences of friendship or *agape* love (*Mystery of Being* 2: 9). As well, Marcel found that Sartre's descriptions of being-in-itself and being-for-itself precluded intersubjective experiences being open toward or welcoming of others (10). Marcel began many of his reflections on intersubjectivity reflecting on experiences of love or friendship (*Mystery of Being* 1; *Creative Fidelity*). Thus, Marcel offered a diverse approach to intersubjectivity, delving into experiences of love and looking for beginnings of these experiences in the heart of existence.

Marcel's philosophical reflection began not just in a self-study but also in an opening up to understanding an other person's experience. He named his anti-Cartesian approach to philosophy as foundational to his philosophy; he rejected the *cogito* as an indubitable for existence. His philosophy began as "a metaphysic of *we are* as opposed to a metaphysic of *I think*" (*Mystery of Being* 2: 9). An intersubjective "we are" rests at the heart of his philosophy. Marcel saw at root of experience of "I am" that "in its intrinsic structure subjectivity is already, and in the most profound sense, genuinely intersubjective" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 182). At the heart of his experience, Marcel encountered an awareness that "we are."

While he acknowledged that he seemed to be making an *a priori* claim, Marcel argued that his own experiences confirmed his claim that "we are" comes before "I think." While asserting that intersubjectivity forms the heart of existence, which seems to be a "proposition" or "intuition," Marcel found that "my experience is in a real communication with other experiences" (*Mystery of Being* 2: 7, 10). Marcel proposed that intersubjective nexus was experienced as a mystery, an experience in which the reflecting subject is involved. As mystery, intersubjectivity is experienced like being or

transcendence, in an indirect way. One does not know intersubjectivity indubitably; instead, Marcel suggested, “I have a more or less distinct consciousness of the underlying unity which ties me to other beings of whose reality I already have a preliminary notion” (*Mystery of Being* 2:17). At the heart of experience, one senses a “notion” of being tied to other beings. Ricœur stated that in Marcel’s thought, “[T]he recognition of the other is not a second step preceded by the certitude of the *cogito*, but rather communication is constitutive of my very existence” (“Gabriel Marcel” 484). Before one develops awareness of self or a sense of being in relation to a he or a thou, one is in communication with. From and in, through existence, a person is in communication *with* other persons.

Marcel associated the primordial notion of being *with* others to one’s experience of any phenomenon as “given.” Some philosophers understand given to mean a “‘brute fact’, a component of perceptual experience...found through introspection” (Vinci 345). Marcel’s approach to “given” reflects this same understanding of “given.” For Marcel, “the intersubjective nexus” constitutes “the necessary condition for anything being given to me” (*Mystery of Being* 2:10-11). This condition, as nexus, as meeting ground between, thus, “allow[s] the thing which is given to ‘speak to me’” (10). In the presence of other subjects, through the reception of things happening to the subject, one experiences things as given by way of this meeting ground.

Marcel suggested that at the heart of experience, one is in the presence of other persons. He contended that philosophical reflection upon one’s own existence and person would uncover a “*we are*” at the foundation of one’s being in the world (*Mystery of Being* 2: 9). Marcel proposed that through reflection, secondary reflection, one is given

awareness of this reality that constitutes one's existence. From the beginning of and in existence, a person is in communication *with* other persons.

Marcel's Philosophy of Intersubjectivity: Attitudes for Dialogue

Marcel's concept of intersubjectivity provides dialogic praxes as attitudes for dialogue. In dialogic praxes, one assumes an open attitude toward and before the other person and one *acts* in accord with this positioning. The ways one *is* and *acts* with and toward others constitute dialogic praxes. I assert that Marcel's attitudes of intersubjectivity offer dialogic praxes.

The presence of an other is an invocation to a person. The invocation may be the beginning of dialogue. One is called upon by and into the presence of the other person. Dialogue begins as an invitation. One can acknowledge the presence of an other and be exposed to relationship with the other. Dialogue involves uncontrolled sharing of oneself with an other. Marcel suggests participation as simultaneously active and receptive being with the other. One participates as an active being toward the presence of the other and one receives the presence of the other person. Participation in presence is a dialogic praxes.

One may acknowledge the presence of the other person as someone with whom intimate relations may emerge. According to Marcel, when persons are co-present in an intimate way, experiences of *co-esse* may emerge. *Co-esse* indicates persons sharing their inner world making themselves vulnerable to the other. Persons trust the other with communication about one's own inner world. In revealing one's world to the other person, a dialogic encounter becomes possible. *Co-esse* as trusting in and entrusted by the other person offers dialogic praxes.

One chooses one's address of the other person as an I-he or an I-thou. One's address of the other reveals one's attitude toward the other person. This attitude may be open or closed to dialogue. Marcel suggested that one selects one's address based on possibility for response (*Being and Having*). One's expectation for the encounter shapes the way one addresses the participants in the encounter. As well, one may shift one's address for the other person when one acknowledges barriers to communication and understands how the other person actually shares a similar situation. Dialogic situations involve possibility for changing attitudes.

One may select an I-he address in which conversation functions as transmission of messages. In an I-thou address, one is aware of being with another person and directs himself toward the other. Because a thou presents himself to the person as an influx of being, the person cannot limit or reduce the other as thou to an object to be known or possessed. The address of a thou offers a ground of and regard for that maintains the two participants as co-present to one another. An address of I-thou protects ground between for dialogue.

When two participants mutually address the other as thou, "we communicate; and this means that the other person ceases to be for me someone with whom I converse, he ceases to intervene between me and myself" (*Creative Fidelity* 33). In this way, the other person ceases to be a third person spoken of as if absent. In an address of thou, one finds oneself being with the other person.

Marcel's concepts of *availability* and *unavailability* are ways that one is open or closed to the other person and given or withheld from the other person. Availability as a being open and given to the other person constitutes a dialogic praxes. As praxes,

availability is engaged in attitude and in action. The available one is present with and to the other, at-the-ready to respond to the needs of the other person. An available person is at one's disposal and extends himself to the other without conditions or expectations for repayments. Attitudes of availability position one for dialogue. Dialogue involves being responsive to particular persons. An available person has the awareness to acknowledge the need of the other and the capacity to respond. Resisting closing in on himself, the person, in praxes of availability, opens himself up to the other person, and a possibility for dialogue begins.

Availability implies extending oneself toward the other without expecting repayment. One *is* available for the other: he has room for the other and offers himself as a gift for the other. Dialogue cannot be expected nor demanded. In creative fidelity, one may promise to remain available for the other and actively renew this promise in the presence of the other person. Participants in dialogue extend themselves toward the other without expectations for present or future encounters.

When two participants encounter one another in a co-presence, communication is possible. This particular communication reveals the persons one to the other, "it is not so much what the other says, the content of his words which exercises on me this stimulating action, but it *is he himself saying these words*" (*Presence and Immortality* 256). Communication of and in presence is a meeting between persons. One who opens himself to the possible meeting between opens himself to dialogue.

In dialogic meeting, persons may experience communion as sharing, understanding, and union. Marcel indicated that communion is a given, experienced as a gift. Both participants in communion remain fully present as a particular person. Those

who commune with one another participate in a mystery of being. Dialogue as co-presence and meeting is also experienced as gift. One remains open to communion and dialogue, but does not plan when or demand that it happens. Openness to communion prepares one for experiences of dialogue.

Marcel proposed that at the heart of experience, one is in the presence of other persons. Reflection upon one's own existence uncovers an "underlying unity which ties me to other beings" (*Mystery of Being* 2: 17). A "*we are*" constitutes the foundation of one's being in the world (9). A person is at his core of existence tied to, indebted to, and given to other persons. From the beginning of and in existence, a person is in communication *with* other persons. At the heart of his existence, a person is oriented for dialogue.

Summary

Marcel's description of intersubjectivity includes dialogic praxes in ways of being *with* and available *for* others. In the presence of an other, persons become aware of being co-present and being *with* an other person. Two persons who are co-present in an intimate way experience *co-esse*. A person relates to the other person as I-he or as I-thou. Marcel's relations of availability and unavailability constitute praxes of response during intersubjective meeting. In creative fidelity, one hopes in oneself to be present in commitments and in availability over time. In moments of co-presence, participating persons may experience communication and communion. Intersubjectivity as co-presence and being *with* reveals a "*we are*" in the heart of existence.

The presence of an other is an invocation upon a person. One can acknowledge the presence of an other and recognize being *with* the other person. In encounters with

other persons, one chooses one's address for the other, as I-he or I-thou, based on one's experience of and understanding about the other person. One engages one's relation to others through attitudes of availability or unavailability. One may have room for the other and a capacity to share oneself with the other. Or one may be unable to extend oneself and thus withholds oneself. When one doubts if one should be able to keep one's promise of being available for the other, one may practice creative fidelity as a decision to hope in one's future capacity for availability. Coming into communication with the other person and acknowledging one another as co-present in a situation, persons may understand one another and feel one another as being *with*, united with, "we are" in communion. Marcel's philosophy of intersubjectivity involves recognizing and acknowledging presence, selecting attitudes as positioning toward the other person, and opening oneself to communion. Marcel's attitudes of intersubjectivity offer dialogic praxes.

CHAPTER FIVE

Marcel's Technics: World Broken by Technology

Living from 1889 until 1973 in France, Marcel witnessed and experienced significant technological change to societal and interpersonal environments. His philosophy addressed experiences of increased industrialization and bureaucratization in modern France. Technological changes emerged as phenomena like chemical and large-scale warfare in World War I, concentration camps then employed before and during World War II, and the atomic and nuclear bombs. Marcel viewed modern France as a world broken by technologies. The world broken by technology affects the persons living within that world.

Marcel's reflections on technology in the broken world address how people experience small scale and broad societal scale technologies. His considerations on technology appeared first in 1933 in his essay "On the Ontological Mystery" and then in 1935 in his book *Being and Having*. His 1940 *Creative Fidelity* and 1945 *Homo Viator* included some reflections on the effects of technology on a person's self understanding or relations to others. *Man Against Mass Society* written in 1951 constituted Marcel's primary text on personal and communal relations to technology. His book *The Decline of Wisdom* written in 1953 considered how technical progress has affected human persons' ability to live wisely. His 1953 work included chapters named "The Limitations of Industrial Civilization" and "Remedies for Dehumanization of the World." In 1963 Marcel delivered a lecture in Heidelberg named "The Sacral in the Era of Technology."⁴⁰

⁴⁰ This lecture was published in *Searchings*, an edited volume of several of Marcel's lectures.

As well, in some sections of his 1963 Harvard University William James lecture⁴¹ he addressed how the human person had been affected by technical progress. Marcel's interview with Paul Ricœur, recorded in *Tragic Wisdom and Beyond* in 1971, included some of Marcel's end-of-life reflections on technology. As a Parisian man from an aristocratic family, Marcel weighed in on general ways that technology affected his Western European environments.

Marcel reflected on how technology affects living in the world, thinking about the world, and addressing others who also live in the broken world. He called attention to experiences of degradation or negation felt by human persons participating in the broken world. Marcel's philosophy examined how technics have created change in macro human relations to environment, how persons relate to technics and self in technological settings, and how technics shape one's view of and approach to the other person. His philosophy addresses macro relationships between persons and their technologies.

This chapter begins with important clarifications about Marcel's general descriptions of and definitions for technology as technics. Second, Marcel's comments on how technics may promote human living are summarized. Third, Marcel's philosophy brings to the forefront technics' negative changes on human relations to social environments. Fourth, Marcel's reflections call attention to changing relations between the human person and technologies. Fifth, Marcel's description of technics reveals its influence on relations between persons. Technology is introduced as a metaproblematic that invites a response.

In reading Marcel's reflections on technology, I interpreted certain constructs to address his reflections. I use Marcel's term technics to describe several topics Marcel

⁴¹ This lecture was published as the book *The Existential Background of Human Dignity*.

addresses in his works. He does not call his own discussion of technics a philosophy. His reflection upon the human person in relation to his environment, himself, and other persons sounds as a philosophy.

Marcel's Technics: Definitions

Marcel's words used to describe technology are complicated by differing translations and interpretations. Thomas Anderson, in an article titled "Technics and Atheism in Gabriel Marcel," claimed that Marcel most frequently used the French word "la technique" to describe interactions with technologies (59). Some English translations converted the word "la technique" to technology (Anderson). For example, Wolfgang Ruf in his translation of "The Sacral in the Era of Technology" used the word technology unless specifically using Marcel's words "technique" or "technical." Translators Stephen Jolin and Peter McCormick in *Tragic Wisdom and Beyond* also used the word technology. Anderson suggested that "technic" is a more accurate translation of Marcel's word "la technique" (59). Other English translations used the words technique or technical. Manya Harari translated Marcel's French word as "technic" ("Ontological Mystery" 31). G.S. Fraser in *Man Against Mass Society* used the words "technique" and "technical" in Marcel's reflections on persons living in the modern world. In his lectures that he delivered in English, Marcel used the word technique, technical, and technocracy. In these same lectures, Marcel used the word technology to refer to materials used as instruments (*Existential Background* 157-8). Jolin and McCormick did use the word technique alongside technology: Marcel said "the rejection of technology, of the world of techniques" (*Tragic Wisdom* 202). Thus, Jolin and McCormick indicated some similarity

between the word technology and technique. The word technics encompasses the complex phenomena of technique and technology and descriptor technical.

Scholars interpreting Marcel's works have connected Marcel's reflections to experiences of technology. Philosophy scholar Bernard Gendreau and communication scholar Dennis Cali used the phrase technology in their respective texts on Marcel's reflections on world shaped by Internet technology. Gendreau and Cali's interpretations of Marcel's works are situated in a historical moment—after Marcel's death in 1973—marked by media ecology perspectives.

Media ecology scholars like Neil Postman have offered descriptions of technology that include technique, material technologies, and technology acting as and within systems. Neil Postman described media ecology as study of “media as environments” (161). Media ecology examines “how media of communication affect human perception, understanding, feeling, and value” (Postman 161). Building upon Postman's description, media ecology scholar Lance Strate suggested “these environments consist of techniques as well as technologies, symbols as well as tools, information systems as well as machines” (19). A media ecology perspective brings techniques alongside technology as media shaping and being shaped by environments. According to one's interpretative ground, the word technology indicates varying phenomena.

Acknowledging complexities in the use of the word technology in Marcel's works, this project defers to Anderson's approach of calling Marcel's general name for technology, technics. When sharing Marcel's reflections about technics, this project includes the terms the particular translators used for Marcel's phrases. References to

Marcel's phrases will include specification about the term the translator and/or Marcel used: technic, technical, technique, technology, or technocracy.

Marcel did not provide clear definitions for his distinct descriptions of technics. He explicated his phrases through descriptions or examples. Marcel has used technique, technic, and technical in describing different situations encountered in the broken world. This section offers a brief introduction to some of Marcel's distinctions between words he associated with technics.

Technics

Marcel's term technics applies to a range of human actions and material products. He used "technic" to refer to the product created through scientific or technical knowledge ("Ontological Mystery" 34). Anderson suggested that Marcel used technics for "things constructed by human beings as instruments to attain desired goals" ("Technics" 59). Thus technics applies to machines, systems and ways of using scientific knowledge (Anderson).

Marcel associates technics and technology with reasoning and organizing functions. In his work "The Sacral in the Era of Technology,"⁴² Marcel described technology as human reason insofar as it strives to manage, so to speak, the earth and everything living within it" ("Sacral" 43). Technology also refers to a "specialized and rationally elaborated skill that can be improved and taught to others" ("Sacral" 43). In these descriptions, technology implies procedures, reasoning, and taught skills. Thus, for Marcel, technology also refers to material things or objects that are methodized or structured by human reason.

⁴² This work was translated from German to English by Wolfgang Ruf. It is uncertain if the original word in German was "technologie" or "technique." (my trans.)

Technique

Marcel offered his definition for the word technique. Technique is “a group of procedures, methodically elaborated, and consequently capable of being taught and reproduced, and when these procedures are put into operation they assure the achievement of some definite concrete purpose” (*Mass Society* 61). For example, Marcel called particular ways of treating persons “techniques of degradation” (*Mass Society* 9).

The concept of technics in Marcel’s work includes human reason acting upon and through material things or social systems and human skills creating and organizing the created products or interactions. His philosophy of technics addresses processes, systems, machines, materials, functions and attitudes shaped by and shaping persons living in the world. Marcel’s philosophy of technics attends to interactions between persons, technics, and the world.

Technocratic and Technocracy

Marcel used the words technocratic and technocracy to describe attitudes, processes, and systems in twentieth century France. A person with a technocratic attitude or mentality addresses the physical world and persons in the world in particular ways. One with a technocratic perspective views the natural world as comprised only by physical matter and forces (*Against Mass Society* 41). Persons with technocratic attitudes view the human person as defined by his function or use in a technical system (153). A technocratic mentality is common in a society dominated by technics. “Technocracy” is a system of total commitment to techniques at the expense of the human person (95-196). As well, a technocracy is a system governed by technical processes and bearing a “tendency towards centralization” (*Existential Background* 162). Marcel described the

Nazis as engaging “the massive and systematic employment of such techniques [of degradation], particularly in concentration camps” (*Against Mass Society* 30). In a technocracy, technics are prioritized and the human person does not matter. Marcel clarified that persons might use techniques in wise ways; however, a “technocracy is inevitably nihilist” (195).

Although Marcel mentioned attending to concrete relationships, his reflections about technics offered generalized claims about societal experiences of technology. Dwayne Tunstall noted that Marcel lacked empirical evidence for his reflections on technics. For example, Marcel made general statements connecting techniques of degradation to dehumanization without always providing concrete examples (“Struggling” 151). While Marcel’s examples largely address macro scale experiences of technology, his reflections on the broken world provide generative discussion about individual use of technology.

Marcel’s insights into interactions between technics and human persons highlight predominantly negative effects on human persons. Thus, this chapter on Marcel’s description of technics mainly focuses on those negative effects. Before addressing how technics have introduced adverse changes for human persons, I summarize Marcel’s identification of how technics bring advantageous changes for human persons.

Technics May Promote Human Living

Marcel acknowledged that certain uses of technics promote openings for innovative human actions. Technics may be used at the service of human persons. Marcel suggested that the intention of the person engaging technics imbues technics with its value at the service or degradation of the human person (*Against Mass Society*). Although

he addressed the many ways technics bring negative changes to human life, he also recognized positive changes for human life. According to Marcel, technics provides opportunities for creativity and improvements of particular human situations.

Technics reveal opportunities for human creativity. In the creation of technics, participants engage inventiveness. Those who make technics need a “withdrawal in recollection” for creating (“Ontological Mystery” 34). Artistic fabrication and scientific research require reflection. Marcel suggested, “Where there is creation there can be no degradation, and to the extent that technics are creative, or imply creativity, they are not degrading” (34). Technics are creative when research methods or products are generative. Technics manifest the creativity of its maker. Marcel proposed that creative generation is not a degrading action. Being inventive, the technic producer and the scientific researcher can be oriented beyond him- or herself. Although the technic inventor may infuse his actions at the service of creating a good, the technic-user more commonly unreflectively consumes technics. (“Ontological Mystery”) The development of technics offers an opening for reflection, invention, and production.

Marcel granted that in some situations technics provide improvements of certain human situations. Although Marcel thought the term “progress” was not an apt descriptor for technological advances, he conceded that this term “progress” could be applied to situations in which technics provide new medical methods or improve housing or food for underprivileged persons (*Against Mass Society; Tragic Wisdom* 154). If technics are used to better serve human persons or communities, then he granted, “Technical progress in the strict sense is a good thing, both good in itself and good because it is the incarnation of a genuine power that lies in human reason: introduces into the outer world

a principle of intelligibility” (*Mass Society* 41-42). Marcel further argues that technical progress also improved transportation and communication (*Against Mass Society*). With improved connections, communities begin to build relations with other communities (*Mass Society* 64). Better connections allow for and promise ongoing sharing of intellectual and technical goods via communication and transport channels. If technics are used to improve the lives and well-being of persons, then Marcel granted that technics used in service of the human person could be considered good.

Although Marcel viewed promise in technical progress, he typically followed descriptions of technics’ promise with qualifications for humans in relation to technics. For example, he acknowledged that although “[T]echnology is good in itself...technology [could] be put to the wrong use” (*Tragic Wisdom* 246). The human person using the material technology may use technology in ways that harm human persons. In 1951 Marcel offered this insight into the complex relationships between technics and human persons,

The realm of the technical, as thus defined, is not to be considered as evil in itself; if we think of it in itself, as I have already said, a technique is rather something good or the expression of something good, since it amounts to nothing more than a specific instance of our general application of our gift of reason to reality. To condemn technical progress is, therefore, to utter words empty of meaning. But from the point of view of truth, what we must do is not to cling to our abstract definitions but rather ask ourselves about the concrete relationship that tends to grow up between technical processes on the one hand and human beings on the other; and here things become more complicated. (*Against Mass Society* 62)

One should not reductively interpret the technical realm as “evil,” harmful for human persons. Marcel recognized intrinsic good in technique as an expression of a good creation. Technics manifest an “application of our gift of reason to reality.” Marcel suggested avoiding generalizations about technics: either concluding technics are always evil or technics guarantee progress. Generalizations about technics offer abstract descriptions about technics and the effects on human persons. Thus, he invited reflecting on the “concrete relationship” that typically emerges between technical processes and human beings (62). In calling for reflections on the concrete, actual interactions between technics and human persons, Marcel invites attending to experiences in the lived world—where technics and human persons cohabit.

While finding technics provide opportunities for creativity and improvements of particular human situations, Marcel also encountered technics acting upon the human person in negative ways. He saw significant changes brought about through technological projects. Technics affected human persons through changes in relations in the lived world. Marcel attended to concrete relationships between the human person and his environment, technics, and other persons.

Marcel viewed technics as having mainly negative effects on human persons. Technical inventions and increased technologizing have brought and continue to generate change for human persons. The broken world, marked by technical change, includes the degradation of human persons. The majority of his reflections on technics address ways technics contribute to the broken world. The next three sections address the ways technics have brought negative changes in human relations with environment, with technics and

oneself, and with other persons. His philosophy on technics focuses on the ways human interaction with technics contributes to the broken world.

Degrading Changes in Human Relations with Environment

Technics have brought significant change to human relations within their environments. Marcel's philosophy of technics considers how technological progress has created degrading changes to human relations with their environments. Marcel reflected upon societal experiences of transformations to ways of being in the world.

Marcel used environment to indicate both physical and social milieus. In *The Decline of Wisdom*, Marcel differentiated two types of environments for human persons, "the natural environment" and "the technical environment"⁴³ (3). In a natural environment, found in "pre-machine age societies," "man is present in his work," takes an active role in production, and fully engages as "craftsman" (3). Marcel described the technical environment, a mechanized society, as an "artificial and inhuman" (3). In this technical environment, man's contact with nature happens through complicated processes and techniques. A natural environment offers "a climate of presence and sympathy," in which the human person is in harmony with his world.

Technics have altered the way the human person dwells in and interacts with his world. Marcel noted that societal technological progress alters how persons live in their environments. Technical developments threaten the "integrity of the human being" (*Existential Background* 162). The integral human being seeks to live internally and externally at harmony with his world. In situations changed by technics, persons experience discontinuity, dislocation, and increasing insecurity about one's own life.

⁴³ Marcel referenced Georges Friedmann's descriptions of technical and natural environments. Friedmann's explanation of these environments appears in a 1952 article, "The Social Consequences of Technical Progress."

Feeling Discontinuity

Marcel perceived that increasingly technical environments disrupted persons' daily rhythms. He noted a "close connection between acceleration of the rhythm of life and the appearance of a humanity which is inwardly more and more impoverished" (*Homo Viator* 80). As one lives a more accelerated life, one experiences a lessening of one's internal well-being. Following timetables for working at factories, persons feel committed to always increase their speed in production. Persons follow a mechanized schedule for production. Marcel noted that before the technical methods of the industrial age time was felt differently (*Against Mass Society* 63). He gave the example of pilgrims from the Middle Ages who physically walked across lands en route to visit a place of significance. These pilgrims experienced time differently from modern workers. Pilgrims felt the passing of time as a "slowness of progress [that] . . . was linked to a feeling of veneration" (63). However, the demand to produce more and work faster marks the life of the modern worker. Marcel argued that this acceleration experienced in a technological age was accompanied by a loss of the "sense of the sacred" (*Mass Society* 63). Medieval pilgrims felt the passing of time as slow progression linked to veneration.

Modern industrial workers, disconnected from life's natural rhythms, seek speed in production. In modern environments, time serves production and is no longer experienced as a natural rhythm of life. Marcel suggested, "technical progress, considered not in itself, not of course from the principles which made it possible, but incorporated into the daily life of individuals, has not been effected without the loss of human substance" (*Homo Viator* 80). Technics alter how persons experience time.

Feeling Dislocation

Technical progress in the industrial revolution involved mass movements from country settings to towns and cities. According to Marcel, as people moved into cities, technology allowed workers to “escape from the cosmic rhythm;” and thus, the city-dweller “ignore[d] more and more systematically his condition as a living being” (*Homo Viator* 81). Living the cosmic rhythm means following natural cycles of sunlight and dark or the seasonal changes. Marcel called this separation from the natural cycles a “dislocation...between man and life” (*Homo Viator* 82). He mentioned electricity as creating unnatural cycles for persons, disrupting sleep or rest patterns (*Homo Viator*). In a modern era, people can work through the night and live in wholly artificial environments disconnected from the natural seasons.

Technics also brought dislocation from one’s local region. Anderson suggested that Marcel saw this technological dislocation being felt as if one were “divorced from one’s organic structure” because one “lived in artificial manmade environment” (“Technics” 62). Marcel suggested that certain rural regions of France had been greatly affected by technology’s dislocations. He described the French region of Brittany as having been “emptied of this spiritual quality, this mystery,” as having lost its “mystery of place” that had marked the region before mass movements to the city (*Homo Viator* 80). Marcel attributed this loss of mystery in regions to increasing disconnection from natural cycles like the seasons (*Homo Viator*). Marcel saw technics altering how persons were connected to natural cycles and local environments.

The societal movements from farm to city also shift local environments. As modern communities experience “mass transfers of populations” due to war or totalitarian regimes, more people experience that this “vital link [was] broken between

man and his environment” (*Decline* 17). Marcel sometimes called this modern worker shaped by his technics, a “technical man” (*Mass Society* 69). For example, a technical man, displaced from his homeland, moves to a city, finds a job and has become the “one-who-can-make-shoes” (*Decline* 17). In a technical environment, the displaced person is reduced to what he could produce. His critics suggested that Marcel’s comparisons between country and city dwellers revealed his antiquated or aristocratic “nostalgia for a previous era” (Tunstall 151). Although he reflected from his particular situation in Paris, Marcel called attention to real experiences of dislocation experienced with the rise of technological changes.

Feeling Insecure about Life

Technical progress means increased control over nature and environments. Modern science promises that this increased control of environments will bring fewer fears about being harmed by nature (*Mass Society* 74). For example, if people can build shelters from storms or protect themselves from animals, they will have increased power over their environments. Yet, in actual technological environments, Marcel saw an increase in people experiencing fear. Although improved technological methods seemed to increase one’s control over natural situations, people’s power over their own anxieties have not diminished (*Being and Having* 74). Marcel noted that people’s fears were even being directed toward the technics. Although one feels increased control through technics, in actuality, a person feels himself to be “at the mercy of his technics, he could not control technology, nor control his own control of technology (“Ontological Mystery” 31). Technics promise increased control to its users yet also seems to be accompanied by increasing fears of losing control of life.

Fears of losing control alter how one views one's own life. Marcel observed, "[A]s preoccupation with security begins to dominate human life, the scope of human life itself tends to be diminished. Life as it were tends to shrink back on itself, to wither" (*Mass Society* 44). Marcel noted people were increasingly worried about their security in the world. Members of communities have lived through mass movements to cities, boundary displacements, and war destruction. Marcel connected this increased concern with a feeling that life itself also had limits. According to Marcel, the fearful modern technical person actively sought "conserving the individual's own skin" (*Mass Society* 44). One's chief preoccupation becomes one's commitment to self-preservation. One approached life decisions from this commitment. Marcel described a modern technical individual who continually calculates any risks to his own life. For example, the modern individual calculates whether it is even worth bringing a child into life. After measuring the costs, bills, and "wear and tear" on one's life, he might even choose to raise a dog instead of a child (*Mass Society* 44). Marcel called this calculating, preoccupied approach to life, a technical perspective.

Technical progress changes the ways human persons relate to their own environment. According to Marcel, increasingly technical settings brought dislocation from previously natural environments. Individuals working in modern technical settings feel disconnected from particular lands and places. Marcel witnessed growing feelings of insecurity about one's own life. One's positioning in the world has been altered through dislocation and discontinuity. In a technical world, one feels out-of-place from one's surrounding environment. Marcel related this feeling of displacement to a feeling of alienation from others in the world ("Ontological Mystery"). This technical progress has

also shaped how the modern person reflects upon the world: one's own internal world and the world around him. Within a-contextual settings experienced in technical progress, one's own relation to technology has also shifted.

Degrading Changes in Personal Relations to Technology

A technical perspective on life also shapes how one relates to one's own life and to the technology present in one's life. Marcel's reflections reveal that as technics become more ubiquitous in environments, technics shape more areas of one's life. In technical settings, persons experience having an increased dependency on technics, a limited sense of the self, no belief in life-after-death, and no awareness of the presence of mystery.

Increased Dependency on Technics

Because most persons participate in technical progress as consumers, one's relationship to one's own technics becomes a relationship of consumption. Consumers relate to technologies as consumable things. Marcel addressed the effects of this type of relationship upon the person. Marcel discussed distinctions between how one relates to objects through *having* or through *being* (*Being and Having*). These distinct relations affect the one relating. One's relationship with things is felt not just as external to the person, but "they [things] reach me, one might say, underground" (164). The more a person is "attached to these things," the greater the power that the things exercise over the attached person (164). The more one treats the things one uses as one's possessions, the more the things themselves "tend to blot me out, although it is I who possess them" (165). "I" possess things and make choices about how to use them. Although one has the

sense that one possesses a thing like a technology, through one's own attachment to it, one actually loses one's own control over how one uses the technology.

Marcel correlated this way of relating to *things* to one's relating to one's *body*. According to Marcel, a relation of having always affects the one who *has*. No matter what one relates to, the object seemingly also acts upon the one who *has*. This is paradigmatically experienced in one's relation to one's body (*Being and Having* 163-64). Marcel suggested that, in one's relation to one's possessions, "[O]ur possessions eat us up...when we are in a strange state of inertia in face of objects which are themselves inert" (165). Relations to things in the world happen in and through relations of having and being before things.

Technics offer human persons increased power over their world. Marcel argued "The moment that we are endowed with power of whatever sort we are exposed to the temptation of abusing it" (*Decline of Wisdom* 10). He contended that, "The exercise of any sort of power should by rights be accompanied by the exercise of control over the power itself" (10). Yet, frequently those who gain technical power "tend to behave as a *parvenu*: like a self-made man who believes (always quite wrongly) that he is in no man's debt" and resisting "any form of limitation or control over itself" (10). Thus, "it is in the nature of techniques to lead the mind into temptation" (11). Man is tempted to trust only technics: "the man who has mastered one or more techniques tends in principle to distrust what is alien to these techniques" (11). A temptation reveals a possibility for decision: one may decide to abuse or limit one's technical power.

Marcel acknowledged that technics make one's life easier and more comfortable. But according to Marcel, technics also affect one's internal life of reflection and

relations. Technics bring personal improvements along with “a certain degradation of one’s spiritual level” (*Against Mass Society* 40). A person dependent upon technics centers his attention solely on external objects and interactions. Marcel indicated “The more a man becomes dependent on the gadgets whose smooth functioning assures him a tolerable life at the material level, the more estranged he becomes from an awareness of his inner reality” (41). A person dependent on his “gadgets” lives in a “process of automization,” thoughtlessly concerned about his material possessions and unaware of his own inner world (*Mystery of Being* 1: 25). People become consumers of technologies like “televisions or refrigerators” (*Existential Background* 160). As consumers, they become “wholly dependent” upon the emergence of new products and are always being addressed through “advertising” as future consumers of produced technologies (160). In his 1963 reflections, Marcel already witnessed technology consumers enslaved to new technical developments.

Marcel acknowledged that while one could become a slave to technics, creativity prevented one from practicing idolatry of technics. Idolatry—involving automatic actions and unreflective consumption—signals and perpetuates selfishness, or what Marcel called an “autolatry: worship of self” (*Mass Society* 63). “Autolatry” means withdrawing within oneself in unreflective self-concern. Marcel considered this self-worship a “degraded” human action (“Ontological Mystery” 33-34). He contrasted this self-concern with creative fidelity. A person practicing creative fidelity is someone who is open to and available for the other person. The available one counters possible “inertia of conformism” or “interior dissipation” (35). Marcel suggested creative fidelity as an antidote for technological attitudes of self-worship. If one acknowledges the presence of

an other person beyond one's self, one could extend "creative fidelity" toward this person ("Ontological Mystery" 36). In orienting a person away from oneself, creative fidelity acts as an antidote for—or counteraction to—idolatry to technics.

Limited Sense of One's Self

As noted above, when one is fixated on external phenomena, one loses sight of one's inner world and may lose oneself in the technical process. One of Marcel's main hesitations about technics was that technics altered communal understanding of what it means to be a person who is both bodied and spiritual. Degrading technical attitudes include viewing the human person as a machine and undervaluing one's own worth.

Viewing a Person as a Machine. Marcel saw that technics had degraded the ways people viewed other persons. A person with a technocratic view sees the individual as a "mere unit of production and judge[d] his worth only in terms of productivity" (*Existential Background* 123). Marcel suggested that impersonal organizations, which treated members as machines of production, also assumed a "technocratic attitude" toward its members (*Against Mass Society* 153). Leaders with a technocratic attitude toward workers view workers who decrease their production levels a broken machine that has become extraneous to the functioning system (71). Output becomes the measure of the person (*Mystery 2* 148). This technocratic view of the person could be applied to entire classes or groups of people as "mere instruments whose output was all that mattered" (*Mass Society* 72). Persons with a technocratic view judge the person according to production.

Technics alter interpretations of what it means to be a person. Marcel quoted Virgil Gheorgiou's 1949 novel, *The 25th Hour*, to describe how people relate to others as

thought they are machines. Gheorgiou wrote: “The West has created a society which resembles a machine. It forces men to live in the heart of this society and to adapt themselves to the laws of the machine” (qtd. in *Mass Society* 173). The modern person was being changed by interactions with technics. The person is compared with a machine that produces. One is being reduced to an assemblage of materials and one’s spiritual dimensions are being ignored. Technics shape persons’ understanding of the human person and contribute to reductive attitudes in the broken world.

Undervaluing One’s Own Worth. Amid increasingly technical settings, the human person has increasingly been compared to machines. While relating more with technics, the person begins to “consider himself in relation to the products of his own techniques... undervalues himself in comparison with the far more precise and effective apparatus which his technical skill has perfected” (*Existential Background* 160). In technical settings, a worker compares himself to machines and finds that he is less effective than the machine.

Making comparisons between persons and machines results in devaluation of the human person. Marcel asserted that people in technological settings value the life of the mind over the life of the body (*Homo Viator*). In the workplace, the product is valued over the producer. Managers measure work in terms of what the worker produced. The worker’s health is secondary to the worker’s production. Thus, technological settings value one’s mind over one’s body. If a technocratic attitude focuses only on one’s mind, one can devalue other aspects of the person his bodily over his spiritual dimensions. Marcel called this privileging one’s mind over one’s body and spirit a “degradation” of the person (*Mass Society* 14). In contrast, Marcel promoted a view of the human person

that addresses one's body, mind, and spirit (*Homo Viator*). Marcel warned against devaluing the bodily or spiritual aspects of the human person.

Loss of Belief in Life-After-Death

Marcel, who converted to Catholicism in 1929, argued that strictly technical attitudes do not permit belief in transcendent realities. One increasingly "considers himself in relation to the products of his own techniques" (*Existential Background* 160). One's self-evaluation becomes a "self-depreciation—[that] leads to radical negation of transcendence" (161). If one is self-defined solely in relation to what one produces, one denies one's spiritual or transcendent dimensions. One aspect of this transcendence includes belief in one's life-after-death. One's view of death reveals the value one assigns to life.

Marcel noted that before the modern era, many people shared a spiritual or religious belief that the human spirit lived on after death (*Mystery of Being* 2). People believed relationships with loved ones did not end with death but continued on in a mysterious way. Yet in the modern era, the "arid influence of technique seems to prepare the radical disappearance of intersubjective relationships, death [of a loved one] . . . would no longer be a mystery, it would become a raw fact, like a dislocation of some piece of mechanism" (*Mystery of Being* 2: 152). Technical interpretations of death dismiss the possibility for mystery. In the modern era, a person's death is experienced as a raw fact, a dislocation that has rendered the company machine useless or as a name recorded as a unit production that no longer functions. Marcel suggested that to hope that a person might live on in some form after death was a form of anti-scientific thinking

(*Against Mass Society*). In the era of technical progress, a modern approach to death is that death signals one's absolute end.⁴⁴

Marcel noted that in the nineteenth century, people imagined that scientific attitudes toward life and death would improve general well-being. Early proponents of industrial technology promised limitless improvements for this earthly life (*Mystery of Being* 2). In the nineteenth century, Marcel suggested that as more people ceased believing in an afterlife, "[L]ife in this world would be more and more lovingly taken care of" (*Mystery of Being* 2: 148). If an earthly life is all a person has for living, then the value of this life should greatly increase. However, Marcel observed that the opposite approach to life emerged: "Life in this world has become more and more widely looked upon as a worthless phenomenon" (148). In his modern historical moment, life without life-after-death did not increase the value of life but led some people to consider life to be replaceable or even disposable. In the modern technological era, people placed their hopes in this physical world. Marcel concluded that misplaced hope had led to human tragedies.

Loss of Belief in Mystery and Transcendence

Marcel contested reductive understandings of the human person offered by participants in technical environments. According to Marcel, "[I]nroads made in our time by techniques [could] . . . not fail to imply for man the obliteration, the progressive effacement of this world of mystery...world of presences and of hope" (*Mass Society* 69). Technics bring a loss of mystery in people's lives. Marcel associated technical progress with a loss of attention to mystery or presence in communities and within the person. The

⁴⁴ Marcel reflected on connections between the technocratic attitude and nihilism. He saw Nietzsche's will to power connected to a nihilistic approach to the meaning of a human life (*Against Mass Society*).

“technical [person] has lost [her] awareness of [her]self and awareness of transcendent elements” (*Mass Society* 55). Persons remain fixated on physical and tangible dimensions of life. This lack of awareness of transcendence is connected to experiences of the broken world. People in a technological era attend to people’s material and mechanical problems and dismiss the presence of mystery—even in their own inner worlds—as unreasonable.

Marcel suggested that in modern communities, technical knowledge was privileged over other philosophical approaches to the world, such as his own reflections on being (*Mass Society* 52). Marcel argued that “an undeniably extreme positivism”⁴⁵ has been connected to actual “devaluation of the person” (*Tragic Wisdom* 155). To Marcel, scholars who studied human behavior so as to offer laws for human action ended up dismissing the integral person consisting of body, mind, and spirit. As an example, he described French engineers who had worked on constructing urban housing projects. Marcel saw the product, massive “barracks” for living, did not take into consideration that these places should be homes for real living and not institutional industrial buildings (*Tragic Wisdom* 153). Hence, the scientific project of building homes served to technically solve a space problem in cities, while overlooking the needs of the actual homeowners. In that modern event, the engineers attended to physical spaces instead of the persons involved in the situation.

Modern technical interpretations of the world dismiss spiritual interpretations of experience. Marcel thought, at times a technocratic view stands in opposition to a spiritual or transcendent world (*Against Mass Society*). A technocratic approach to the person reduces the person to a machine or a functioning unit of production. Marcel argued that this view of the person did not account for the spiritual dimensions in the

⁴⁵ The research method of positivism involved offering laws about human actions (Millan et al. 20).

human person (*Mystery of Being* 2). In an interview with Marcel published in 1968, Ricœur noted that Marcel, consistently throughout his work, prioritized the human person over that which was not human (*Tragic Wisdom* 246). Marcel proposed that the spiritual and transcendent dimensions shaped the person as an integral whole. He continually called for attending to the person as an integral whole: as someone open to—although not necessarily believing in—a life beyond the physical life. His view of the human person as open to belief in transcendence constituted a leitmotif throughout his philosophy of existence *and* his philosophy for technology.

Amid extending technical environments, Marcel drew attention to how a person could become increasingly dependent upon his technics. A person's relation to his physical technics shapes him, as technics-user, in potentially damaging ways. Increased engagement of technics also shapes how persons view the human person. The human person becomes comparable with his machines and his own worth diminishes through these comparisons. Marcel connected this changing view of the human person to a loss of belief in an after-life, mystery, or transcendent dimensions in life. According to Marcel, persons had lost sight of the human person as being more than just a machine or as actually bearing spiritual dimensions. A technocratic interpretation of the human person shapes the creator, user, and owner of technics. As well, the technics-user co-exists alongside other technics-users.

Degrading Changes to Relationships with the Other Person

Blending together his view of the person in relation to one's environment, to one's technics, and to oneself, Marcel addressed how technics shape one's approach to other persons also living in shared technical environments. Technics affects ways of

sharing resources, views of the other's life, and practices of being for or withheld from the other person.

Threats to Sharing of Resources

Improved technics had initially promised improved living conditions, communication, and transport of goods. "Technical and industrial progress" had been predicted to improve personal well-being (*Against Mass Society* 65). Yet, the sharing of goods happening in technical progress has not resulted in widespread well-being for people. Instead, as Marcel pointed out, the sharing of technical goods was accompanied by exchanges of money which—unlike well-being—was limited and, therefore, contested (*Mass Society* 65). Thus, technical progress actually results in territorial and competitive interactions between persons in society. Antagonisms and envy expressed through warfare or competitive conflicts over limited resources emerge between persons and nations (*Mass Society* 65). While technics promised increased sharing between persons, technics brought competition over limited quantities of goods.

Reductive View of the Other's Life

One's desire to self-preserve shapes how one views the life of others. The example of the person calculating the value of bringing a child into life also reveals a loss of sense of sacredness of a life. Marcel connected this loss of sacredness of life to increasing technical perspectives. He contended that "in a world where technology enjoys absolute primacy, a desacralizing process inevitably sets in that is directed against life and all its manifestations, particularly against the family ("Sacral" 51). A technical perspective taints one's view of life and reasons for bringing life into the world. With the increased fears and anxieties felt in dislocation from local or rooted life, Marcel

suggested that life itself seemed insecure (*Mass Society* 70). For many persons in technical settings, life is no longer “a gift to be handed on, [but more] as kind of incomprehensible calamity like a flood, against which we ought to be able to build dykes” (*Mass Society* 70). The birth of a child signals one’s loss of control. The life of another is thus seen as a financial burden. If the value of one’s own life wavers under the primacy of technics, a person feels uncertain about—or burdened by—bringing another life into a devalued existence.

Amid technical progress, one’s production signifies the value assigned to the lives of others. As Marcel suggested: “The less men are thought of as beings...the stronger will be the temptation to use them as machines which are capable of a given output” (*Mystery* 2 148). In large state systems, the person is viewed as a machine whose purpose is to produce, and as such, is treated as a replaceable machine part. When a person no longer produces, his value disappears and he could be eliminated. This technocratic attitude toward the other person appeared in tragic dimensions in the twentieth century in the form of forced labor camps or the Nazi cremation ovens (*Mystery of Being* 2: 148). Here, to the extreme, persons were treated as machines of production or as disposable lives.

If one views the person as a functioning unit, or a machine, the physical dimensions of the person matter. Marcel claimed that a society that values material dimensions of the person to the exclusion of any spiritual dimension functions “radically against intersubjectivity” (*Mass Society* 17). One’s openness to spiritual dimensions in life signifies an openness to others, felt as “*philia* (attachment)” or “*agape* (charity)” for others (*Mass Society* 17). Marcel suggested that attending to the spiritual dimensions

within oneself opens a person to the presence of an other, opening one to being in relation with concrete other persons.

Techniques of Human Degradation

Life in a technical environment is viewed as meaningless or sacred and as fearful or as hopeful. Interpretations of one's own life shapes one's view of other's lives. For Marcel, experiences in modern technological France reveal the breadth and depth with which life interpretations shape intersubjective relations in societal and interpersonal contexts.

On a societal level, confusion about who the human person⁴⁶ is includes reducing the other person to "mere abstractions," a name listed and identified by the state for work in a factory or military service. If a person is simply an abstract concept, he is disposable. The abstracted person could fight—and die—in wars, as a nameless, bodiless number. This spirit of abstraction directed toward the human person leads to "techniques of human degradation" on massive scales (*Against Mass Society* 10). In the 1950s, when Marcel was writing this particular reflection, "techniques of degradation" included world wars, concentration camps, and atomic bombs (49). Persons use techniques to advance a factory or a political cause. These techniques are used in complete disregard for the human persons affected by the technics. Individuals or governments can abstract the persons involved in a situation to be factors of a technique. Once the person has become abstracted, the person may be addressed as less-than human or not human at all.

⁴⁶ Marcel acknowledged that the concept "persons" and "personal rights" had been used by people who wished to justify and perpetuate class differences (*Against Mass Society* 174). Although the term "person" had been misused by some people to justify prejudices, Marcel argued that one could continue to legitimately use the term "person" in one's philosophical reflections (*Against Mass Society*).

Marcel contended that this “spirit of abstraction” could result in “technological excesses” with drastic consequences (Ricœur in *Tragic Wisdom* 246-247). Techniques of degradation used by totalitarian governments include labor camps or the use of torture to elicit confessions from persons (*Mass Society* 10-11). In both World Wars, Marcel witnessed abstractions of persons as units of production or as disposable soldiers. He argued that these abstractions of the human person dismissed the human person as bearing spiritual, bodily dimensions. A spirit of abstraction drives leaders or persons to dismiss the value of each human life. In ongoing efforts in Western Europe to develop technology for military or national interests, Marcel saw continual threats of dehumanization in the treatment of any and all persons (*Tragic Wisdom*). The more persons become mere abstractions and means for technical progress, the less persons are addressed humanely.

Techniques of degradation also are practiced as inhumane treatment between members of communities. Marcel described totalitarian governments in East Germany post World War II who set persons against their neighbors in the production of information to serve government interests. As governments seek to maintain control of its citizens, surveillance increases, one’s “private life, as such [does] not exist any more,” and interpersonal trust erodes (*Mass Society* 15). Growing techniques of degradation result in persons distrusting their own neighbors. Techniques of degradation appear as relational practices between persons in small scale communities and in international relations.

No Room within for the Other

Marcel viewed technics as changing one's inner orientation toward other persons. Technics act on a personal level: "Technical progress incorporated into the daily life of individuals, has not been effected without the loss of human substance" (*Homo Viator* 80). Loss of human substance is experienced as a diminishing belief in transcendence (80). One's lack of transcendence leads one to feel that one's life happens only on physical and material dimensions. Life viewed solely as a physical dimension becomes a life that is "inwardly impoverished" (80). One's evaluation of one's own life shapes how one relates to other persons (*Homo Viator*). Marcel's works suggested that in technical environments, "A certain core of the sacred in man has been violated" (Ricœur in *Tragic Wisdom* 247). When this core of the sacred has been threatened, one views one's own life as having been diminished. In this diminishing, persons no longer view the *other* person's life as being sacred.

Marcel suggested that if one believes that one's own life is sacred, then one is open to acknowledging that one's life bears a dimension of mystery. Even if someone did not believe that an "image of God" was present in each person, one could still encounter the presence of a mystery or sacred presence within the other person (*Existential Background* 128-133). Marcel believed in recognizing the presence of being in or within the other person. One stands in-the-presence-of being in the other, being that is irreducible to one's own standards or ideas. If one sees that the other person bears a likeness to oneself, one is aware of "the living tie that unites all men" (*Existential Background* 135). One's awareness that each human person bears a sacred core shapes how one relates to each particular person.

The antithesis of this acknowledgment of shared sacredness is unavailability. Attitudes of unavailability are forged by and in technical environments. An unavailable person, concerned with his own health or possessions fences himself off from others, so as to protect his own life and wealth (“Ontological Mystery”). In technical environments, resources are finite and may be contested. Persons in a technical situation experience “an inner inertia” of feeling frozen by fear and anxiety about one’s material resources being threatened (*Creative Fidelity* 54). Marcel argued that “there is no infallible technique which will permit us to free ourselves” from this fear (54). One’s fears shape one’s approach to the other person. The unavailable person “gives me nothing, he cannot make room for me in himself, whatever the material favors he is prepared to grant me” (“Ontological Mystery” 40). The fearing unavailable one cannot make room within for another person. Anxious for his own resources, he views the other person as “at my disposal” or one to be disposed of (40). The unavailable one cannot recognize the presence of sacred life in the person before him. Focused on material needs and resources within oneself, an unavailable person loses sight of the presence of the sacred in the other person and is unable to emerge from his self-concern to discover the other person.

Metaproblems of Technics: Challenges for Dialogue

Technics have created change in how persons are in body, in the world, and with one another. Some of these changes present challenges for dialogue. Marcel described a few changes that offer opportunities for creative action in the world. Technics offer opportunities for innovative human actions. Those persons who create technics participate in enriching actions. He mainly reflects upon the ways technics limits one’s relations in environments and with one another. Technics introduces changes in human

relations to environment and produces challenges for dialogue as problems of dislocation, increased dependency on possessions, and a technocratic view of the person.

Marcel, with the persons of his historical moment, had heard the many positive changes technics had promised. Therefore, Marcel wanted to call attention to actual negative changes that had happened to the human persons. Changes brought by technics to human relations with environment, self, and others reveal challenges for dialogue in a broken world. Challenges for dialogue in a world broken by technics are presented but do not completely obstruct the possibility for dialogue.

Technics introduces changes in human relations to environment and produces challenges for dialogue. Dialogue requires situated participants who are connected in a shared time and place. Marcel saw persons living in technical environments feeling disconnected from both time and local places. Persons in a technical world, have lost a sense of natural rhythms and cycles, and feel accelerated in living. The ever-moving technical worker is always displaced and attached to no place. Persons inhabiting technical environments may feel “dislocation...between man and life” (*Homo Viator* 82). Persons moving through and within technical environments may feel challenged by disconnections and dislocations. One may also feel one’s own life is not secure. Amid technical calculations about future living, a person feels preoccupied by fears for a future. Persons in a technical environment feel rushed through time, displaced, and fearful for the future. The time, the place, and hope for dialogue are limited.

In technical settings, persons experience themselves having an increased dependency on technics. Dialogue emerges when two persons are fully present each to one another. The greater one’s attachment to one’s technics as possessions, the less one

can relate to others in the world. Marcel described a person addicted to his gadgets who lives a thoughtless “process of automization.” One may become so consumed in technics one withdraws in “autolatry” of self-worship. Because one only thinks about one’s self, autolatry precludes the possibility for dialogue.

Marcel described technics contributing to technocratic view of the person in the broken world. In dialogue, one understands oneself as active living human person and so one can participate in dialogue. One might undervalue one’s own worth as a human person alongside technical producers and products. One could dismiss the presence of mystery in the person and in the world. Technical processes do not always enrich human persons. The human person is not just defined by his physical or material dimensions. His value, his spiritual and transcendent dimensions, is not definable through technical processes. Disbelieving in one’s own capacity to engage life including and beyond technics, a technical person does not seek out human encounters. One’s hope that one can engage in dialogue is conditioned by one’s hope in one’s own life. If one has lost one’s own sense of being “sacred” because one *is*, one is “inwardly impoverished” (*Homo Viator* 80).

Technical environments provide challenges for dialogic encounters between persons. Marcel noted that amid technical progress, increased conflict about limited resources creates competition between persons. One’s view of the other’s life is altered by lenses of competition or potential threat. The life of another person may be interpreted as a burden or as unproductive. Thus, one approaches the other person, not as living co-existent, but as competing companion. Dialogue eschews reductive views of the other person. Dialogue invites meeting as co-existents. One’s reductive view of the other

person can assume extreme manifestations as “techniques of degradation.” When one person has been degraded by another, the possibility for dialogue disappears. Persons are not co-present to one another, the fundamental ground for any communication has dissolved.

Technics present problems of dislocation, autolatry, and reductive approach to the person. Marcel called for reflection upon these problems. An objective approach toward problems does not take into account the presence of human persons. These problematic situations cannot be fully understood by using technical thinking. Marcel called situations or phenomena that could not be addressed through an objective approach, “meta-problematical.” The problems experienced by human beings in relation to technology are meta-problems, “situated beyond the world of problems,” or irreducible to solvable problems (“Ontological Mystery” 178; *Being and Having* 171). Ways for approaching and using technology do not appear as technological proposals.

The changes in human relations to environment, to technology, to oneself, and to other persons invite a response *other-than* the responses offered as objective approaches. Marcel used the word “metatechnical”⁴⁷ to describe wise practices in a technical world (*Tragic Wisdom* 199). A practice that is “Metatechnical or metatechnological . . . involves a critical questioning of technology, of the very notion of technique” (199). An other-than response calls for philosophy and praxes attentive to human and personal dimensions of the problem. Marcel’s philosophy of being in body, reflecting, and being *with* others offers one metatechnical approach.

⁴⁷ Marcel’s word is translated in *Tragic Wisdom* as “metatechnical” (199) and in *The Decline of Wisdom* as “meta-technical” (11). This project uses the term metatechnical.

Summary

This chapter summarized Marcel's reflections on technics. First, Marcel's definitions for technics were offered. Then, this project identified ways technics may promote human living. Next, I shared Marcel's explication of how technological changes have marked human relations with the environment, with oneself, and with technology. I identified ways that technics, according to Marcel's description, provide challenges for dialogue. The challenges of technics—as metaproblem—invite a metatechnical response.

While Marcel offered reflections on the use and effects of technics, he did not weigh in extensively on *how* to relate differently amid technical environments. Anderson noted that Marcel suggested practically no ways to counteract the negative impact of technics on a person (“Technics”). Marcel did not offer guidelines for using or not using technics.

Technical progress changes the ways human persons relate to their own environment. In situations changed by technics, persons experience discontinuity, dislocation, and increasing insecurity about one's own life. According to Marcel, increasingly technical settings brought dislocation from previously natural environments. In a technical world, one feels out-of-place from one's surrounding environment. Changes brought by technics to human relations with environment, self, and others reveal challenges for dialogue in a broken world. Challenges for dialogue in a world broken by technics are presented but do not completely obstruct the possibility for dialogue.

CHAPTER SIX

Dialogic Praxes in Marcel's Philosophy: Hope for Being in a Technological World

Marcel mainly identified ways that technics had contributed negatively to interpersonal relations in the broken world. His philosophy of technics reflects his focus on general effects upon the human person in his body, outlook, and relations. Marcel's reflections on technics offer valuable insight into contemporary experiences in technological settings.

As a conclusion to this project, Marcel's philosophy is brought alongside problems of technology in the contemporary world. A world broken by technology invites a dialogic response. Marcel's philosophy of being in body, attending to being, and being with others offers dialogic praxes. Thus, Marcel's philosophy offers dialogic praxes for being in my body, attending to being, and being *with* others as a response to the world broken by technology. This chapter explicates *how* Marcel's philosophy offers dialogic praxes.

This project introduces Marcel's philosophy of intersubjectivity into discussions of dialogue. Dialogue has been described and defined from varying religious, philosophical, psychological, and phenomenological perspectives. A study of dialogue includes a shared commonplace understanding of dialogue as "the idea that any utterance or act is always responding to and anticipating other utterances and acts" (Wood xvi). This chapter attends to some commonplaces of dialogue.

This chapter explores how Marcel's philosophy offers dialogic praxes for being in my body, attending to being, and being *with* others in the world broken by technology. First, I describe the broken world as modern and postmodern, broken by technology and

inviting a metatechnical response of dialogue. Second, I address *how* Marcel's philosophy, as reflection and practice, offers dialogic praxes for being in my body, attending to being, and being *with* others in the world broken by technology. I address each of these areas of dialogic praxes as a separate section. In each section, I weave together problems experienced in technical environments, dialogue as a way of responding to this problem, and Marcel's dialogic praxes. Thus, in each section Marcel's dialogic praxes blend with descriptions of dialogue as response to problems in technical environments. Third, I summarize Marcel's warnings and hope for the *persons* navigating a technological world. Fourth, I address the Marcel's contributions for the field of communication. Fifth, I offer a summary for the dissertation.

The World Broken by Technology: An Invitation to Dialogic Response

Marcel's philosophy reflects upon and responds to problems in his particular historical moment. Marcel's historical moment in France shares similar features with this project's contemporary historical moment. This section examines the shared features of Marcel's world broken by technics and the contemporary world broken by technology. Both Marcel's world and the contemporary world include modern and postmodern conditions and commitments.

Marcel is situated in a simultaneously modern and postmodern world broken by technics. Marcel calls for an other way to address problems in the world, a way beyond technics, a meta-technical way. Dialogue emerges as a response to problems in the broken world. Marcel's philosophy as dialogic praxes acts in response to the historical moment.

The Modern and Postmodern World: Broken by Technology

Marcel's philosophy reflects upon and responds to problems in his particular historical moment. Marcel's historical moment in France shares similar features with this project's contemporary historical moment. Marcel's world broken by technics shares a similar background as contemporary world broken by technology. Both Marcel's world and the contemporary world include modern and postmodern conditions and commitments, are broken by technology, and invite a metatechnical response.

Marcel's philosophical reflections sound amid a historical moment marked both by modern and postmodern conditions and commitments. This historical juncture includes modern attitudes alongside postmodern questioning. Technology emerges as, in, and upon a modern and postmodern world. Technology simultaneously promises progress and fragments projects.

Commitments to modernity include attitudes toward and interpretations of the world. Modern commitments include a rejection of philosophical or religious tradition and traditional interpretations (MacIntyre). Modernity has been described as a breaking apart "of the three domains of science, morality, and art" (Schrag 6). Scientific knowledge championed by the Enlightenment offered authoritative interpretations on all realms of life: the natural, social, and intrapersonal (Randall). Modern authorities discarded traditional values—associated with religious or philosophical traditions—and metaphysical⁴⁸ interpretations of the human person and world (Ellul; Marsh et al.).

Modern scientific discourse sometimes sidelined ethical or linguistic voices from offering

⁴⁸ Metaphysics bears complex meaning as discussed in Marsh, et al *Modernity and its Discontents*. Marsh, et al describe Martin Heidegger's proposal to end metaphysics alongside his acknowledgment of presence, Jacques Derrida finding in metaphysics a logocentrism that does not allow space for written texts, and John Caputo's critique of metaphysics used to position philosophers in a "transcendental" position above other approaches to the lifeworld (139).

interpretations of the lifeworld (Ellul; Gadamer). Throughout Marcel's life span, shared understanding of the meanings of "human," "progress," and "values" had disintegrated. Philosophers differed on descriptions of what it meant to be human, to act ethically, or to know and describe the world.

A postmodern condition emerges in response to modernity. Modern belief in universal explanations is upended by questions about the universal applicability of interpretations, questions posed by a postmodern mind. Amid this "collapse of metanarrative" in our postmodern condition, difference emerges as differing worldviews, political, or economic proposals (Lyotard). In this condition, Calvin O. Schrag describes "heterogeneity, multiplicity, diversity, difference, incommensurability, and dissensus become the chief interpretive categories of the postmodern mind" (8). Amid a metanarrative collapse, possibilities for multiplicity also sound. While some modern philosophical projects prioritized mental representation, other twentieth century philosophers focused on how one knows the world as and in *being* in the world (Westphal). In a postmodern condition open to interpretive possibilities, traditional interpretations may also be rehabilitated (Benhabib). A broken world, home to persons who assume diverse interpretations of that world, offers openings for *other* interpretations.

Life in contemporary technological age is shaped by the presence of ever-new promises sounding upon the broken world. Since mythical settings as the Tower of Babel to Plato's myth of Theuth, human communities saw promise in technological progress, while also witnessing some experience of loss in the presence of technology.⁴⁹ This

⁴⁹ Media ecology scholar Neil Postman called for reflection during technological invention, "what will a new technology do?" and "what will a new technology undo?" ("Five Things" 2).

coexistence of promise and brokenness in twentieth century Europe sets the stage for Marcel's philosophy and communication in a modern and postmodern moment.

The broken world as technical environment is a world open to and fragmented in communication. Marshall McLuhan saw in the disappearance of spatial limitations, the emergence of a broader conversation in a global village (6). As well, Sherry Turkle suggested that online settings might offer space for liberating forms of communicating. However persons also experience isolation, absence, and misunderstanding in encounters within technical environments (Bugeja; Turkle). In human-technology relations, communicators report simultaneous and/or conflicting experiences of connection and disconnection with other persons. Human-technology experiences occur in, with, and through one's body, mind, and relationships with others. One experiences the broken world in fragmented communication. Experiences in a technological age call for renewed attention to person-technology relations implicating mind-body relations, person-to-person relationships, and possible barriers to understanding and communicating interpersonally. Gabriel Marcel's philosophical reflections respond to this call, as a voice finding challenges and promise for human persons navigating a technological age.

In twentieth century France, Marcel heard the metanarratives on the authority of science and the certainty of technical progress that promised to improve the human condition. Marcel also witnessed the actual effects scientific discoveries and technical advancements had brought to human lives (*Against Mass Society*). The broken world was a world characterized both by societal progress in technology and by dislocated, technology dependent, degraded, and insecure persons.

As a world marked by progress, technology promises ongoing improvement for technology and technology-users (“Sacral” 44). Technological progress promotes the limitless potential within technology. Marcel called this belief in the lack of limits to technology “optimism in technical progress” (“Ontological Mystery” 31). People believe that technological thinking awakens consciousness about how to better serve humanity (*Mystery of Being* 2: 184). Yet, Marcel saw deep faith in technics had led to societal suffering that had reached “a mortal level” (*Mass Society* 66). However, people continue to trust in technics as the way to solve human problems.

Marcel did not hold the same faith in technological thinking. Instead, he felt that “the ghastly experience of more than thirty years leaves little optimism” for technological thinking bringing the solution for human problems (*Mystery of Being* 2: 184). The answer to problems happening to human persons as a result of technology will not come through technology.

A Metatechnical Response to Technology

The broken world requires a metatechnical solution. Marcel suggested an other proposal for engaging technology. Marcel proposed, “Wisdom is of an entirely different order that is metatechnical or metatechnological in the sense that it often involves a critical questioning of technology, of the very notion of technique” (*Tragic Wisdom* 199). In practicing wise reflection, a metatechnical action, one critically reflects upon or calls into question the authority of technical methods. In wisdom one approaches the technical world with an *other* interpretation of the world.

Seeking insight into the human condition, Marcel turned to traditional philosophies and religions (*Decline of Wisdom*). He called attention to the human person

as more-than his physical material realm, as a being in the world. Marcel's philosophy addresses the challenges technics have presented to persons living in a technical world, the broken world. Marcel also professed his hope in human persons who navigated the technical world.

In his 1953 book, *The Decline of Wisdom*, Marcel clarified that he was not promoting a return to a pre-technical era nor avoidance of any modern technology use. He also did not advocate complete immersion in technology. He suggested that technology—used a certain way—could help human lives. Persons, through reflection and wise actions, might interact more humanely in technological environments (*Decline of Wisdom*).

In modern life, the human person has inherited what Marcel called “the burden of technics” that cannot be put aside (*Decline* 19). Marcel sought understanding of “how we may struggle efficaciously against the weight by which in a technical age man is dragged down into the excesses of technology” (*Decline* 19). He acknowledged that technology shaped and would continue to shape life in the modern world. In responding to the “excesses of technology,” Marcel proposed attending to being-in-body, reflecting, and attending to one's neighbor. Being-in-body, reflecting, and being with others sound as dialogic praxes.

Dialogic Praxes as a Metatechnical Response

Marcel called for praxes of being-in-body in, reflecting upon, and attending to others in the broken world. Dialogue as philosophy and praxes attends to ways of being in body in the world, of reflecting upon the world, and of being with others in the world. Although he does not explicitly name his proposals dialogic, Marcel's suggestions sound

as dialogic praxes. Thus, Marcel's proposal for ways of engaging technology in the broken world contributes to discussions about dialogue. Marcel's reflections sound in harmony with particular characterizations of dialogue.

Marcel's philosophy of technics blends with descriptions of dialogue as responsive to the historical moment. Dialogue offers a metatechnical response for persons navigating the broken world. In a postmodern moment of multiplicity of voices and a "collapse of metanarrative," (48) Ronald C. Arnett and Pat Arneson describe dialogue as a response by a particular community in and to a historical moment. Dialogue may emerge between persons appropriately connected to the historical moment. Persons living in a modern/postmodern world broken by technology attend to openings for dialogue in their particular situation. Marcel's philosophy responds to his historical moment.

In environments marked by technological thinking, dialogue also offers an other-way of approaching the world. When "conduit-based, positivistic, or excessively individualistic and agentic accounts of human action" do not address the complexities of a situation, dialogue may offer an alternative approach (Cissna, Anderson, and Baxter 11). Dialogue involves heuristics distinct from agentic or positivistic methods (11). For instance, dialogue bears "an *environmental ethic implicit in it*, being ever so responsive to the historical moment" (Arnett et al. 16). Dialogue permits the study of communication as an environment in which participants act and are acted upon. Offering an other-than heuristic for human action, dialogue is a metatechnical response.

Possibilities for dialogue emerge in response to historical moment. Marcel's philosophy describes ways one might respond to the broken world. His reflections on the body, reflection, and intersubjectivity respond to his historical moment and also to a

world still marked by modern promises for technical progress. He shared his philosophy in dialogue with participants of his historical moment and his philosophy still offers meaningful insight today. Marcel's philosophy, as reflection and practice, offers dialogic praxes for being in my body, attending to being, and being *with* others in the world broken by technology. In dialogic positioning one is in one's body in the world, in dialogic reflection, one attends to being, and in dialogic attitudes, one is *with* others in the world.

Dialogic Positioning in a Technical Environment: Being in My Body

Persons experience problems of being-in-body in technical environments. Dialogue offers a way for persons to be-in-body in the world. Marcel's philosophy of being body in, with, and through offers healing praxes for being-in-body in the world broken by technics. He calls for dialogic positioning in a technical environment by being in my body. Marcel's praxes of being in my body blends with descriptions of dialogue as response to problems of being in body in technical environments.

Problem of Being-in-Body in Technical Environments

Communication scholars identify problems of being-in-body in technological settings. This section addresses just three problems of identity in being-in-body in technology. Compulsive technology use, anonymous online communication, and virtual body identification are some problems of being in body in technical environments.

Being-in-body with technology, one may develop an addiction to using technology. One's use of technology becomes a problem when technology limits one's freedom to be able to act. Studying the effects of Internet use on the user, communication scholars have noted addictive aspects of using the Internet (Young). Some users report

experiencing compulsive Internet use or an inability to self-regulate one's use (Tokunaga). Compulsive Internet use involves one's physical, emotional, and psychological being-in-body (Tokunaga; Young). Scholars note different levels of addiction to using technologies (Young). One's Internet use affects how one is in the world. Compulsive Internet use in limiting one's freedom to use or not use technology shapes one's being-in-body.

The presence of anonymous communicators in online discussions also introduces a problem of being-in-body in technical environments. One may engage in online discussions as an unnamed participant. An anonymous commenter appears disconnected from a body. He communicates without fear of being discovered in person (Stryker and Reynolds). Because the bodiless communicator cannot be located, he is not connected to his expressed words, and so feels he bears no responsibility for the effects of his words (Rosenberry 2011). Disembodied expressions spoken by unlocated, unnamed bodies disrupt civic online conversations and discussions.

Explorations of body-identity also present a problem of being-in-body in technical environments. Scholars address the body as a way to constitute identity through and in technologies (Schilling; Stone). A person may also explore identification as a virtual body distinct from one's physical body. Research on gender identification online initially predicted promise for complete freedom to express one's gender as a virtual body (Stone). Persons identified as virtual bodies distinct from their physical bodies. Although expecting to be able to freely express one's gender as virtual body, persons encountered limits⁵⁰ in the online experience of one's own body (Ess; Stone; Van Doorn et al.).

⁵⁰ A middle-aged male psychiatrist had mistakenly been identified as a woman and so he continued to communicate using this persona. He experienced resistance from his particular online community.

Allucquere Stone described a “metaphysics of presence” that locates one agency within *a* physical body (91). One’s “physical locus” or “presence” prevents one from achieving a fully disembodied virtual identity (Stone). The realization that one’s body limits one’s identification in online settings was called a “corporeal turn” (Enriquez 59). In a corporeal turn, one is “‘bodily aware’ of the embodied performances” engaged as “ways of knowing in motion” (Enriquez 66). Body is always located and embodied as this body.

One uses technology and experiences that one cannot control one’s own use of technology. Technological environments are experienced as worlds disrupted by unlocated anonymous participants. When one attempts to identify as a disembodied person in a virtual reality, one encounters limits to that expression. One’s body calls upon a person and communicates limits to ways one *is* in the world. Problems of being in body in a technical world invite what Marcel calls, a metatechnical response. Dialogue as a positioning in body toward the other is one metatechnical response to being in a technical world.

Dialogue: Positioning Toward

In *I and Thou* and *Between Man and Man*, Buber described dialogue as an orientation toward, or a form of human meeting. Buber highlights life as being in relation to the other. In human meeting, participants are turning toward the other and meeting the other. Buber describes dialogue as a way to be together as persons. Dialogue as turning toward involves one’s body. In Buber’s approach to dialogue, one must “step into direct relation with” the other, “Man can only enter relation with the whole being” (Friedman 59). This dialogue involves bodily metaphors: stepping into and entering. One can only

Participants in his online community suggested that he was being deceptive. Communicating as-if one is one way online when one is actually another way in-body may be interpreted as deceptive communication. (Stone)

step in, with, and as one's body. One enters relation as one's whole being. In dialogue, "one steps into direct relation with" as an embodied one into relation with. A "direct" relation indicates a positioning toward through an extending of one's body. In, with, and through body, the one turning toward the other steps into direct relation with the other one.

Dialogue is a way of being and communicating in, with, and through body. Dialogue offers a "mode of corporeal/linguistic expressivity" (Arneson 83). In dialogue one might express one's particular way of being-in-body. Corporeity limits and allows one to communicating in, with, and through a particular, located body.

Explorations of identification as virtual bodies online reveal desires for expressing being-in-body. Persons in the broken world seek ways to communicate being-in-body in technological environments. Persons who use technology extensively report dependencies or addictions upon the technologies. Marcel's reflections on being-in-body offer timely insights for the problems of being in body in technical environments.

Marcel's philosophy of existence may seem opposed to one's navigation of technology. A philosophy of existence addresses the person in his concrete situation, embodied and in relation with other persons. Paul Ricœur noted that that Marcel suggested that a philosophy of existence keeps one from being overcome by technology (*Tragic Wisdom* 246). For Marcel, existence constituted a ground distinct from the realm of scientific or technological thinking. Thomas Anderson used Marcel's attention to the body as situated communicator to interpret experience in technical environments ("Body and Communities"). Marcel's philosophy protects the human person from becoming

abstract disembodied community members (Anderson). Marcel's philosophy offers a response to problems of being in body.

Being in My Body in a Technical Environment

Marcel's philosophy of body offers possible ways of being in technological situations. Dialogue as a positioning in body toward the other is a metatechnical response. Marcel's philosophy of body blends with descriptions of dialogue in response to problems of being in body in technical environments.

Marcel acknowledged the effects of technology upon broken relationships in the world. Marcel's image of struggling under the weight of excesses of technology reveals an embodied person actively positioning himself in relation to his technologies. Marcel contended, "I think what we need today is to react with our whole strength against the dissociation of life from spirit which a bloodless rationalism has brought about" (*Decline* 19). Marcel called attention to associating one's life with one's spirit in one's experience in one's body. Attending to being-in-body offers a way to connect one's life with one's spirit.

Being Located In My Body. In the technical environment, the human person experiences dislocation from particular environments. According to Marcel, the technological person is displaced from his environment and reduced to sameness in uniform technological environments. Marcel calls for acknowledgment that I am in the world as bound to this body. Body is always particular body, my body. Amid experiences of uniformity, one *is* uniquely present in the world, in, with, and through one's own body. A person feeling displacement may experience grounding in his being in, with, and through his body.

Being Life and Spirit. Marcel described technical progress affecting persons by disrupting one's living natural rhythms of seasonal cycles. One is rushed through days so as to follow work schedules. Marcel described a separation between life and spirit. One's working, physical body does not have time for contemplation (*Against Mass Society*). If one pauses to just reflect on one's own being in body, Marcel suggested one would encounter a mystery of being (*Mystery of Being* 1). In one's own internal realm, one encounters the presence of inexplicable mystery. Contemplation of one's experience in body uncovers one's existence as incarnate being. One is being in, with, and through *this* particular body. Reflecting upon one's own body introduces one into the presence of mystery, where life and spirit dwell.

Being and Having My Body. Internet addictions act upon the person as being in, with, and through body. In Internet addictions, one compulsively scrolls through screens, stimulating the mind while the body remains stationery. One feels as if one has the power to use or not use the technology. One bears power to act because one has a body. Thus one acts in, with, and through one's body. Yet in Internet addictions, one loses control over one's body. One compulsively acts in, with, and through one's body. In actuality one has lost a dimension of having one's body as one's body.

One may also lose control over one's technology as possessions. One who is addicted to his gadgets uses his things in a "process of automization" (*Mystery of Being* 1: 25). Marcel linked this automatic action to a lack of awareness of one's own internal world. When one only lives externally, one can begin to relate to entities in the world through external relations of possession. Marcel called for conscious awareness that one has an internal world, a world where one *is*. In one's consciousness of one's own

existence as my body, one becomes aware of oneself as *being* in the world. Reflections on *being* in, with, and through body awaken one to analyze *how* one is in the world as mind and body.

Feeling With Others. Feelings function as actions. Marcel proposed that feelings allow one to choose one's positioning toward the other. One may feel *with* the others through one's being responsive and receptive toward the other person. One may withhold feeling *with* the other. Through one's own body, one becomes aware that the other person is co-present in body. Feelings reveal the body as responsive or in position toward others. In attitudes of bodily responsivity, one may position oneself toward an other.

By feeling that one is *with* others, one may enter into relation with the other. Buber depicted dialogue as a "step into direct relation with" the other (Friedman 59). Marcel spoke of feelings not just as changing moods but also as attitudinal positioning. Marcel's description of feeling *with*, in which one "open[s] oneself to" the other, (*Creative Fidelity* 29) sounds alongside Buber's proposal for dialogue. For Marcel feeling *with* involves a receptive-active opening to the other. Buber's philosophy indicates, "Man can only enter relation with the whole being" (Friedman 59). Marcel's praxes of feeling *with* offers dialogic praxes.

In technical environments, one may feel fear about one's own life. Experiences of dislocation or disconnection may give a person a feeling of alienation from others (*Homo Viator*). This feeling affects one's position toward one's own life. As one worries for one's own life, one does not have nor make space within for responding to others (*Creative Fidelity*).

Freedom for Being in My Body. One, who is self aware of being incarnate being, is aware of being in, with, and through one's body in the world. This person is free to choose his positioning in the world. However, as persons have attempted to choose their own gender identification as virtual bodies, they have encountered limits to being in virtual bodies (Stone). Marcel's described a limit to being in body as the principle of incarnate being: one is located in body as *my* body. Although technical environments promise unlimited freedom for persons, persons encounter limits in *being* in my body online.

In freedom, one chooses one's positioning in the world. In corporal expressivity, one is free to select what one expresses, but the body in which one expresses *is* a limit to one's freedom. One is free to position oneself in the world, but one cannot choose the body in, with, and through one positions.

Marcel's philosophy of body blends with dialogue as positioning toward in response to problems of being-in-body in technical environments. Marcel declared, the embodied, rooted person "constitute[s] our only imaginable safeguard against a condition of technocratic barbarism" (*Mass Society* 174). One's body calls upon a person and communicates limits to ways one *is* in the world. Marcel's philosophy of existence as being-in-body and vital experience offers an antidote for dislocation felt in technological environments.

Dialogic Reflection in a Technical Environment: Attending to Being

Persons in technical environments lack time and ways for reflecting. Dialogue as an art of reflective questioning provides a metatechnical response. Marcel's philosophy offers dialogic reflection as healing praxes for ways of attending to the broken technical

world. In response to the lack of reflection in technical environments, Marcel's praxes of responsive reflection blends with dialogue as an art of attending.

Problem of Reflection in Technical Environments

Persons living in a modern world report problems with reflection. This section addresses several unreflective practices noted in persons living in technical environments. Increased multi-tasking reveals incapacity to focus on particular tasks. Modern technology-use indicates particular ways of experiencing the world. In the technological world, persons approach problems from technical perspectives.

Communication scholars identify a lack of reflection in technological settings. Attention to one's technology creates distracted practices in face-to-face settings (Campbell; Ess; Stephens et al.; Storm-Mathisen). As media access rises, the possibility for media multitasking, or concurrently using one or two types of media while performing non-media activities has also increased (Jeong and Hwang). Multi-tasking technological users report lacking time or skills for reflecting (Cheong et al). Popular press author Maggie Jackson suggested increased multi-tasking via technology leads to increased distraction and incapacity to focus one's attention.

Skills for reflecting involve habits of analytical framing that have been shaped by technology use. Surrounded by technology, the modern person thoughtlessly consumes media and uncritically believes technology will help one solve problems (Postman, *Technopoly*). Neil Postman suggested that the technology creators do not reflect enough on whether the technology will in fact solve any problem. Technology shapes and is shaped by persons' ways of reflecting upon the world.

Technological reasoning also addresses problems in particular ways. In technological societies, persons seek technical growth in products and processes (Ellul). Persons in technological environs may focus on increasing control of their environments at any cost. Ellul suggested that as technological persons seek to increase control, the openings for mystery in human life disappear. When one seeks to know the world so as to make calculations or predict motion, mystery becomes unrecognizable. Person in a technological moment interpret problems through the scientific lens of quantitative analysis. If a person seeks solutions for his problem on Google, his problem is defined by Google's authoritative algorithms and technological biases (Groys).

Amid increased technical activity, persons experience a shortage of time and space for reflection. Technical interpretations of the world appear as quick ways to solve problems via Google search engines. Although the technical world increases in complexity, persons in this world experience decreasing time for addressing technical multiplicities. Marcel suggested that a lack of reflection in a technical world invites a metatechnical response. Dialogue as an art of reflective questioning provides a metatechnical response.

Dialogue: Attending to

In a technical world, dialogue is practiced as an art of reflective questioning and as attending to broken communication. A world broken by distraction and thoughtlessness invites pausing to attend to events and persons. Hans Georg Gadamer presents dialogue as an art questioning and interpreting.

Gadamer describes dialogue as an art of questioning, a laying open or bringing out that strengthens what is said and thought. One may dialogue with texts through

questions, reflections, and answers. In the questioning and reflecting, participants' ideas are mutually strengthened. In reflecting dialogue, participants communicate meaning (Gadamer). Language offers a site and opening for understanding. The meanings of the words of texts "represent a fluid multiplicity of possibilities," limited by the actual words and invitational as a "thing" to be questioned (271). An art of questioning reveals a capacity for formulating questions. Dialogue emerges as an art of reflecting upon spoken, written, or thought words.

Technical activity and commitments to progress contribute to experiences of restlessness in the broken world. Persons feel rushed by public production goals. Organizations set hard deadlines and emit electronic reminders to indicate upcoming deadlines. Persons in the broken world seek ways to understand what is happening to persons amid technological environments. Dialogue as an attending to the words offers an art of reflection.

Attending to Being in a Technical Environment:

In response to the lack of reflection in technical environments, Marcel's praxes of responsive reflection blends with dialogue as an art of attending. Responsive reflection offers ways of attending to being in the broken world. One engages the technical environment through active engagement. Marcel suggested that one might also "struggle efficaciously" within one's technological environ through reflection (*Decline of Wisdom* 19). He stated "Most important on the plane of speculation is to deepen once again the notion of life itself in the light of the highest and the most genuine religious thought" (19). Marcel suggested that speculation or reflection were key actions for understanding one's own life. In this invitation to "deepen" one's understanding of life, Marcel included

the possibility for transcendent or religious connections. His call to reflection upon one's own life opens the person to realms beyond just the physical world. In response to the lack of reflection in technical environments, Marcel's praxes of responsive reflection attends to the person, acknowledges technical reasoning and knowing, pauses for reflection, responds in reflection, allows for mystery of presence, and opens for transcendence.

Attending to the Person. Persons in the broken world may be unaware of the meaning of their own lives. A person may see himself as a unit of production. He may feel defined by his function. He may evaluate his life by his level of technical skills. In technological settings, the openings for mystery in human life disappear (Ellul). While the person is overlooked in the broken world, Marcel called for attending to who he is as person, valued, and present in the world.

Reflection upon how one *is* in the world may reveal one to oneself. Marcel contended, "Philosophy must bring to light the profound but usually unarticulated uneasiness man experiences in this technocratic, bureaucratic milieu where what is deepest in him is not only ignored but trampled underfoot" (*Tragic Wisdom* 14). In a technocratic milieu, one might ignore or not get past physical dimensions of life. Through attending to being in person in the world, one refuses to accept reductive interpretations of one's own life.

Acknowledging Technical Reasoning and Knowing. Persons with technocratic perspectives approach the world as only physical, full of technical problems requiring objective solutions (*Against Mass Society* 41). Technocratic thinking attends to problems while philosophical reflection opens one up to mysteries. The modern person

thoughtlessly consumes media and uncritically believes technology will help one solve problems (Postman). Marcel called secondary reflection an antidote for technocratic perspectives.

Pause for Reflection. Multi-tasking technology users report lacking time or skills for reflecting (Cheong, et al). Attempting to do many actions at once, persons feel fragmented, and distracted (Jackson). Marcel described persons in technical environments unreflective consuming technics and thoughtlessly using “gadgets” (*Mass Society* 63). One does not feel as if one has time to step back and reflect upon anything. Marcel suggested secondary reflection as a “meta-technical” response to distraction (*Decline of Wisdom* 11).

Respond in Reflection. Secondary reflection offers an antidote to a solely objective approach to problematic situations. Some problems in a technical world cannot be solved with an objective or scientific method. One must discern if the problem is actually a mystery. If one faces a mystery, then one must also acknowledge that an objective approach cannot help one address the situation. A mystery invites secondary reflection. One must reflect upon the situation and one’s own role in the situation.

In recollection, one gains power to think about the world from an approach distinct from technical thinking (*Decline* 11). Bernard Gendreau recognized that Marcel thought technology-use leads to a lack of reflection. In technological settings, many persons lack capacity for secondary reflection. Gendreau suggested that Marcel invited shifting from attending to technological productivity or efficiency to “dwelling in contemplation on the mystery of being within our integral authentic self” (238). Marcel’s

philosophy invites contemplative practices. By pulling back from situations in reflection, one can recognize the presence of being in one's life or in the life of others.

Gadamer's art of dialogue sounds alongside Marcel's responsive reflection. Gadamer's dialogue involves a laying open of the text. In Marcel's secondary reflection, one contemplates situations as mystery and one's own participation in life as mystery. Marcel invites recollection as a standing back from one's own life—metaphorically, for one can never fully separate oneself from one's own life—to attend one's life (“Ontological Mystery”). One who recollects simultaneously “withdraws from and draws closer to [oneself]” (24).

Allowing for Mystery of Presence. Modern experiences of brokenness in dialogue call for recognition of presence. Acknowledging the presence of the other offers a way across the chasm. Marcel suggested that secondary reflection opens a path to recognizing and appreciating presence. Through inner reflection upon one's own uneasy experience in a technocratic milieu, one would recognize presence of being and mystery in one's own experience and in the world (*Mass Society* 68).

Openings for Transcendence. Marcel's attention to deeper dimensions of a person may also signal openness to transcendence. In his inner depths, a person encounters an ontological exigence, a need for being. Marcel saw this need for being as a longing for the world beyond this world. This longing signals an opening for transcendence. Marcel interpreted one's longing for a world beyond the natural world as a spiritual longing that each person possessed (*Mystery of Being* 1). Marcel's deeper notion of life involves thinking and acting in a spiritual dimension (*Decline* 19). This spiritual dimension of a person empowers a person to stand in distinction from technological thinking. Marcel's

thought calls attention to the presence of and awareness of life as a deeper dimension in each person.

A person experiencing being reduced to a functionary or material person recognizes at the core of his existence that his life purpose is oriented beyond material or functional dimensions. His life takes on meaning in light of the spiritual dimensions to his life—signals of a life after death or meaning transcending rational interpretations. Marcel did not suggest that one must believe in religion to acknowledge these dimensions (*Decline*). He invited being open to other-than interpretations of the world.

Marcel suggested that his contemporary interpretations of the world as technologically structured for progress or destined for material decay result in despair about living in the world. Amid existential interpretations for life-in-the-world as meaningless, anxiety-driven, or worthless through recollection, one could come in contact presence. If technological thinking dismissed spiritual interpretations and resulted in tragic events of the twentieth century, then Marcel suggested that opening up to spiritual interpretations might provide healing approaches to meaning and life.

In a technological world, problem-solving or scientific thinking is privileged over wisdom. The technocratic approach studies the human person as a material, physical, and functioning object. For Marcel a technocratic approach induces a reductive view of the human person. Marcel suggested viewing the person from an other perspective.

Marcel called for an other-than technological approach to persons in the broken world. This dissertation suggests Marcel's praxes of reflection respond to the broken world and brings to light within the person deeper dimensions that are openings to spiritual and transcendent approaches to the world. Marcel's dialogic reflection is a

healing praxes for ways of attending to the broken technical world. Responsive reflection blends with descriptions of dialogue as response to the technical ways of thinking.

Dialogic Attitudes in a Technical Environment: Being *With* Others

The following sections will address a particular way the world is broken by technics, why this problem may be addressed through dialogue, and how Marcel's philosophy offers healing praxes for interpersonal relationships. Persons experience problems of being *with* others in technical environments. Dialogue as an attitude toward the other offers a metatechnical response to these problems. Marcel's praxes of being *with* others blends with descriptions of dialogue as response to problems of being co-present in technical environments

Problem of Being *With* Others in Technical Environments

Being Co-Present Online. Communication scholars identify problems of recognizing the presence of the other person in technological settings. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) scholars have studied how mediated contexts affect communicators' awareness of being present or absent to others through technology (Craig and Wright; Enriquez; Loomis; Schloerb; Schultze; Vergeer and Pelzer; Walther). Short et al. described social presence⁵¹ as one's awareness of the other person being *in* the exchange. Short et al. proposed that communication via "disembodied media," like a telephone, involves less nonverbal cues and thus leads to a decrease in intimacy between communicators.

Social presence is experienced through immediacy or nonverbal communication that foster the feeling of being near the other person (Mehrabian). Building upon these

⁵¹ Short et al. described social presence as "the salience of the other in a mediated communication and the consequent salience of their interpersonal interaction" (65).

theories, Charlotte Gunawardena extended the study of social presence to CMC contexts, noting that the experience of social presence *online* includes determining one's degree of certainty that the other person with whom one is communicating online is a real person. In this online context, because the communicator cannot communicate nonverbal cues, the other person may also be felt as absent or lacking presence (Leiter and Dowd; Loomis). In general, social presence theorists find face-to-face communication offers space for affective and interactive actions (Lowenthal), and therefore, allows a genuine experience of presence. CMC lessens sensory involvement, which lessens, or flattens, the quality of the interpersonal communication.

Challenging the proposal that physical absence leads to a *lessening* of communication, Joseph B. Walther suggested that communication in online contexts might improve communication. Through extensive quantitative research, Walther argued that the missing nonverbal cues in the online context may actually allow for a *heightening*, or hyperpersonal communication ("Computer-Mediated Communication"; "Interaction"; Walther et al.). According to Walther's research online users feel freer to share online what they would not share face-to-face.

Communicators report conflicting experiences of co-presence in online communication. Some scholars propose that presence can be most recognized when persons are face-to-face. Other scholars suggest that persons can communicate one's presence to others in a heightened way in the online context. Technological environments reveal a problem of recognizing the presence of others.

Relating to the Other Online. Online communicators report experiences of online bullying and incivility. Communication scholars have called attention to incivility in

political online discussions (Hurrell; Kenski et al.; Papacharissi; Zhou, Chan, and Peng). Participants in online discussions report feeling attacked or ridiculed when participating in public discussions online (Galbraith and Jones; Kenski, Coe, and Rains). Technological environments have become spaces where participants may lack of respect for one another.

Persons immersed in online environments may also manifest self-absorbed behavior. Concerned with one's online image or activity, online communicators report diminished sense of other persons (Brunskill). Lance Strate noted the growing presence of narcissism in "electronic culture" (130). Self-centered communication is increasing in online communication.

Communication technology introduces persons in the world to problems of presence, respect, and self-centeredness. Due to the "disembodiment" of interpersonal communication in online settings, persons experience uncertainty about how recognize the other as persons co-present in an online setting (Tanis and Postmes 957). Michael Bugeja argued that disconnection between persons experienced online is unresolvable. According to Bugeja, technology creates a real "interpersonal divide" between persons that cannot be crossed. This project takes a diverse approach to the problems of online communication and attends to openings in the situation. Problems of interpersonal communication in a world broken by technology invite solutions for recognizing presence, practicing respect, and becoming aware of the other person.

Broken connections, disrespect, or individualistic communicators present challenges in online communication. These challenges affect relationships between persons communicating in online contexts. Persons report feeling uncertain if other

persons are really co-present in technological environments. Marcel witnessed similar technological problems amid the persons in twentieth century France. Problems of being *with* others in a technical world invite metatechnical response. Dialogue offers healing praxes for broken interpersonal relationships. Dialogue as an attitude toward the other is a metatechnical response.

Dialogue: Attitude toward the Other

Dialogue involves one's bodily and attitudinal positioning before and toward the other. Technical environments form contexts that complicate dialogue. First, I discuss dialogue as an ethic and active positioning toward other person. Then, I address discussions about dialogue in technological environments. Within environments, interpersonal and technical, one selects how one *is* oriented toward the other.

Dialogic Ethics. Dialogue as an ethic engages an awareness of, positioning, and attitude toward the other person. Lisbeth Lipari, in her discussion on listening, stated, “the ontological ground of dialogic ethics is thus an intersubjectively grounded self that is called into being by the relational encounter with the other, the face-to-face” (191). Dialogic ethics as being and acting *with* other persons involves self who is called upon others. The self who is “intersubjectively grounded” is always in relation to others. One recognizes one's own self by relational encounter. Self as participant in dialogue is self by encounter with an other.

The one participating in dialogue is always-already in response to others. Arnett described the “responsive I”⁵² as an I who is actually “called out, called forth by the Other” (“Beyond Dialogue” 152). One engages dialogue in receptive and responsive

⁵² Arnett offered this description in his concluding discussion of Emmanuel Levinas' work on dialogue (“Beyond dialogue”).

ways. One is before the other in response to a calling from the other. Communication scholars have attended to Martin Buber's and Emmanuel Levinas' descriptions of dialogue. This project extends this discussion by attending to Marcel's philosophy as a description of dialogue.

Dialogue Online. Interpersonal communication functions distinctly in the technological contexts. Communication scholars, through extensive quantitative research, describe ways interpersonal communication is improved in and challenged by online settings. In some research, computer-mediated communication in its affordances for immediacy and honesty allows for *improved* self-disclosure and relational growth (Boyd and Ellison; Jiang et al.; Walther). Other scholars report a lack of social trust in online environments (Beaudoin), and online experiences of deception and misinterpretation (Burgoon et al.). Conflicting descriptions of improved and challenged interpersonal relationships in technological settings invite reflection from a philosophical approach.

Communication scholars have offered dialogic attitudes for engaging interpersonal communication online. Amit Pinchevski suggests that a Levinasian approach to mediated communication includes ceding control in online contexts, so as to remain welcoming toward the Other, also as irreducibly other. Leiter and Dowd used Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of the lived-body to describe how persons experience the presence of others in online settings. One experiences lived-body as both subject and object. Leiter and Dowd compared this experience of body as both subject and object to being *with* others online. In online encounters, a person experiences the other person as being simultaneously present with and distant from. Scholars suggest that online communicator may relate to that other as co-present or may experience a disconnection

from the other person. Choosing a position of dialogue involves reflecting, being, and acting in the world.

Technological settings introduce challenges for interpersonal communication. In mediated conversations, persons are uncertain if the other person is really present. In online discussions, people address others in harmful ways. Attentiveness to dialogue includes attending to one's own challenges in being *with* the other. A person seeking dialogue turns to his own attitudes to address problems of connection in technological settings. Aware that he is "called into being" in relation to others, he attends to how this dialogic relation unfolds in technical environments. Communication scholar Dennis Cali suggested that Marcel's intersubjectivity as an "ecological restoration" offers ways to restore the broken world (115). Marcel's philosophy of intersubjectivity offers healing ways of being *with* other in technological settings.

Being *With* Others in a Technical Environment

Addressing brokenness in relationships in his world, Marcel suggested healing ways one could be *with* others. Marcel's healing ways constitute dialogic attitudes. Marcel's praxes of being *with* others blends with descriptions of dialogue as response to problems of being co-present in technical environments. Being *with* others happens as acknowledging, being co-present with, choosing an address, being available, and open to *co-esse*.

Acknowledging the Other Person's Life is Sacred. The first question to ask, is who is the other person? Interpersonal relations in the broken world are marked by a technocratic view of the other person. Marcel contended that a materialistic view of human life leads to devaluation of each person's life. The other person is valued for his

production. Technology is valued more than human life (*Against Mass Society*). The other person's life is a threat to one's own life. The presence of the other person may be a burden. If one views the other person as a threat, one may treat the other as competition. In technical environments, persons do not recognize "the presence of the sacred" in the other person (*Decline of Wisdom* 19). Persons then may employ techniques of degradation toward others. When the other person's life is not sacred, this life may be dismissed.

Marcel invited responding to the question, who is the other person, by acknowledging, he is a being *with* me. One stands before the other person and one is "called out, called forth by the Other" (Arnett "Beyond Dialogue" 152). Marcel suggested that a person with a technocratic attitude "ignores [the] presence" of the person before him ("Ontological Mystery" 14-15). He cannot see the sacred in the other person.

Marcel described a conversion from a technocratic attitude to a discovery of the sacred in the other. He stated, "Conversion is first of all the movements by which the consciousness turns away from the oppressive and distressing spectacle that the technocratic view of the world offers" (Sacral 53). Conversion from technocratic view leads to "inwardness" or inner reflection, and inner reflection opens a way to "rediscover the sacral" in persons in the world ("Sacral" 53). He did not mean religious conversion but a bodily and attitudinal movement (*Decline of Wisdom*). Conversion stems from the Latin word *convertire* meaning to turn around or transform. In conversion, one recognizes the other person as living being. One's conversion of attitude toward the other alters one's positioning in the world.

Marcel connects one's conversion of attitude to one's positioning toward others in the world. In one's conversion, drawing within to reflect on being-in-the-other person, a "relationship of one individual to another, of an I to a thou" emerges ("Sacral" 53). As one draws within oneself to reflect upon one's own attitudinal position toward the other person, a relationship of an "I" addressing a "thou" becomes a possibility.

Being Co-Present. Overcoming temptations to view the other person reductively, one cannot dismiss the presence of the other. Marcel contented that the presence of an other is an invocation to a person. In a technical environment, one may be uncertain if the other person is really present or not. Marcel suggested attending invocations as the sound of the presence of an other. In technical environments, one may not be able to guarantee that an actual person is present. Due to the lack of nonverbal communication, one may not be able to discern if one is communicating with a machine or a person. Technical environments provide challenging situations for discernment.

When one encounters indications that an other is present, one, engaging a dialogic attitude, interprets the indications as being called upon by and into the presence of the other. Countering reductive or dismissive interpretations, Marcel invites belief *in* presence (*Presence and Immortality*). The invocation to acknowledge presence may be the beginning of dialogue. Even—and maybe especially—in technical environments, one is called upon by and into the presence of the other person. One is called upon to be *with* others in the broken world.

Being With. One is always a being *with* others. Even in one's self—that which seems most personal and privately owned—one is "called into being by the relational encounter with the other" (Lipari 191). Marcel also proposed that at the heart of

experience, one is in the presence of an other. Reflecting upon one's own existence, one encounters not an "I think" but a "*we are*" (*Mystery of Being* 2: 9). Although one feels as if one acts alone, an individual tied to no one, one is—by existing—in the presence of others. Thus in all ways one is in the technical world, one is always being *with* others.

Although one is a being *with* others, Marcel acknowledged that one does not always realize this. One begins existence as response to, "I am this reply" (*Homo Viator* 70). Yet, one comes to "know myself to be reply" (71). Through reflection upon existence, one becomes aware of one's life as reply. Marcel's call to reflect upon one's life as reply offers a dialogic attitude toward one's own life.

Choosing an Address for the Other. One chooses one's address of the other person as an I-he or an I-thou. In face-to-face encounters, Marcel suggested that one selects one's address based on the possibility for response (*Being and Having*). In technically mediated encounters, one might also choose one's address based on how the other has and might respond. In technically mediated contexts, one's extends one's address before an unknown audience. One's typed words appear before an unknown quantity of persons. An address of I-he may serve as an appropriate tone for public conversations. Marcel's description of an I-he allows for exchanges of information as fully external meetings.

Both addresses of I-he and I-thou acknowledge that one addresses the other as person. An address assumes a relationship with, one *is* with another being, always deserving of acknowledgment. All communication online is communication *with* another person. Acknowledgment of being *with* means that all words written and spoken sound *with* another person. Marcel's attentiveness to being *with* makes invocations upon

cyberbullies or anonymous commenters who communicate as if their words did not affect actual persons.

Marcel acknowledged the possibility for changing how one addresses the other. As one communicates with the other person, the other person shares more of who he is. The person becomes present as an “influx of being.” Through computer screens, the person communicates who he is, and his communication as an “influx of being” calls to be addressed as thou. In technical environments, one navigates communication through thoughtful selection of one’s address of the other.

Being Available for. In technical environments marked by suspicion and alienation from the other, Marcel offers an important invitation to practice availability (*Against Mass Society*). Technical environments may include self-centered communicators or narcissistic actors. Marcel described the persons incapable of sharing inner resources with others, the unavailable one. The unavailable one engages technology so as to amass social capital and individual success. Technological screens seemingly protect a person from having to clear room for the other person within one’s life. When persons become too demanding, one simply ignores their messages. An unavailable one senses that his territory—his time and space—is threatened and withdraws within his own world.

An available one is open to the other person. He is present with and to the other, at-the-ready to respond to the needs of the other person. He is able extend himself to the other person. He shares himself with the other without conditions or expectations for repayments. Attitudes of availability position one for dialogue that is not conditioned. In

a technical environment when time and space are contested realms, uncalculated gift-giving upends competitions.

The available one gives himself in-person to the other person. Interpersonal gift-giving as a conditioned given appears in the broken world as if from an other world. The available one accesses a capacity to give that seems beyond human strength. Marcel suggested that the ability to do any metatechnical action is a gift (*Decline of Wisdom* 20). Practicing availability in the world broken by technics offers healing actions for participants in the world.

Open to Co-Esse. Acknowledging the difficulties in trusting that the other person is who he says he is, one may encounter opportunities to share inner world with other persons. In sharing more than one's external physical world one opens up to intimate co-presence, a *co-esse* with the other person. Dialogic attitudes of being *with* and being available *for* the other open an interpersonal abode, a home amid technical environments.

Countering the degrading technocratic view of the other person, Marcel's dialogic praxes involves being *with* and available for the other person in caring ways. Marcel's praxes of being *with* others blends with descriptions of dialogue as response to problems of being co-present in technical environments. He offers dialogic attitude as a healing ways of being *with* other in technological settings.

Marcel's Hope for *Being* in a Technological World

Marcel warned that technology presents negative effects on human being as body, as being, and as being *with* others. He suggested warnings for using technology. He invited hope for the *persons* who engage technology.

Technology has promised and promises an ever-improving human living. Marcel's life began in 1889 the same year that the Eiffel Tower—a symbol of promise and prominence of industry and science for modern France—also appeared in Paris. In modern France, Marcel observed widespread “optimism in technical progress” (“Ontological Mystery” 31). However, technical “progress” also brought degradation of human persons. Marcel witnessed the effects of technology used by humans *against* humans. Sometimes technical “progress” happens alongside, due to, or as a result of degradation of persons. Human persons are participants in, casualties of, by-standers to, and constructors of the world broken by technology.

Marcel lived as a participant in a world broken by technology. He noticed the presence of optimism in technical progress alongside “the existence of a widely diffused pessimism” (*Against Mass Society* 42). Persons living as in technical world report feeling “a sort of physical nausea at life” (42). When one places one's trust in technology to solve one's problems, one has misplaced one's trust. One feels disquietude amid technical progress. Marcel proposed that this pessimism leads to despair.

Marcel warned against placing one's trust in technology. He suggested that technology use could lead to experiences of dislocation and disembodiment. He alerted that invested possessing of technologies might lead to being enslaved to one's technology. He proposed that devotion to techniques would decrease attending to other persons. Marcel could not have foreseen the ways technology has in fact brought problems of embodiment, compulsion, or isolation. Yet, the lessons from his reflections still resonate among persons in the contemporary world.

Marcel invited creating hope in being: being in body, being as mystery, and being *with* others. Marcel had hope in *beings who* engage technology. Beings who engage technology could attend to being in, with, and through body above all. Thus, persons would attend to one's own body and the other as body in the world. This dissertation calls Marcel's philosophy of body a dialogic positioning, a praxes of being in, with, and through body. Beings who engage technology could become aware that the world is broken and respond to that brokenness. This dissertation suggests that Marcel's proposal for reflection, as responsive reflection, offers dialogic praxes. One may continually reflect upon the world and attend to the possibilities for experiences of mystery or transcendence. Beings who engage technology could acknowledge the presence of other beings who are *with* them in the world. This dissertation calls Marcel's intersubjective practices dialogic praxes as attitudes of being with and available for others. Amid the world broken by technology, one may find a metatechnical response in Marcel's proposal for being in my body, being in, and being with others in the world.

In a Marcellian approach, one acknowledges the possibilities of technology and one refuses to hope in technology. Hope for a technological world means hope *in* the persons engaging this world. Marcel hoped that persons in the broken world could heal. Healing for persons would not happen through technology but through attentiveness to being in body, to being in, and to being with others in the world. Marcel envisioned wise pathways through modern insecurities involved:

In this age of absolute insecurity we live in, true wisdom lies in setting out, with prudence to be sure, but also with a kind of joyful anticipation, on the paths leading not necessarily beyond time but beyond *our* time. (*Tragic Wisdom* 213)

Amid insecurity, dislocation, and displacement, Marcel described wisdom—an other-worldly approach to technology—as a “setting out” in actual actions *in* the broken world. He acknowledged uncertainty about the way and duration of the path. Marcel described a joyful anticipation about the path. This attitude of expectant joy indicates Marcel’s own hope in the possibility for wise paths through insecurities. Marcel proposed hoping in *persons* who could creatively heal interpersonal relations in the broken world. Before tragic experiences of technology, Marcel called for hoping the creative persons who are in, reflect upon, and interact in the world. His invitation invokes ongoing response and reflection.

Marcel’s Contribution to Communication Scholarship

This project brings Marcel’s philosophy alongside conversations about being in body in the world and with others. Marcel’s philosophy has been richly explored for its philosophical importance as dialogue (Cooney; Gallagher; Hanley; McCown; Schilpp and Hahn). His ideas and insights offer openings for promising exploration of its communicative significance.

Persons navigating this particular historical moment profess modern and postmodern commitments. Technical perspectives on the world offer compelling evidence for objective interpretations of the world. Technological insight provides improvements for humans living in the world. Technology promises technical progress. Living in this world, Marcel attended to his experience of being in that world, a multiplicity of technical and natural environments. Marcel offered insightful descriptions of the world as environments. His philosophical reflections on technics add to discussions

by Lewis Mumford, Jacques Ellul, and Marshall McLuhan on technology and environments.

Marcel's reflections on being-in-the-world emerge as he *is* in the world in, with, and through his body. He contended "the world *exists* in the measure in which I have relations with it which are of the same type as my relations with my own body—that is to say inasmuch as I am *incarnate*" (*Metaphysical Journal* 269). Marcel called attention to primordial experiences constituting human experience. His inceptive question, "Who am I—I who question being?" ("Ontological Mystery" 16) initiated and animated his philosophical journeys. He attended to himself as "I," as "I who," and as "I who question."

Marcel's philosophy of body attends to body as my way of being in the world. One may ask "Who am I" because one assumes *that* I am. Marcel sees the body as indication *that* I am. Along with twentieth century philosophers Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Karl Jaspers, Marcel offered an observant philosophy of existence (Wahl). Marcel's philosophy of body contributes to communication scholarship on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's and Jean-Paul Sartre's proposals for embodiment. Marcel's reflections on being in, with, and through body offer generative openings for further exploration of embodied communication.

As an "I who question[s]," Marcel's orientation in the world was as one who reflects upon. His philosophical studies and his work as a drama critic shaped and were shaped by Marcel's attentiveness to the world and others in the world. His description of reflection includes communicative responsiveness. He does not promote an individual thinker theorizing on the world from a distance. Marcel's philosophical reflection is

always in response *to* particular situations. This project names Marcel's reflection a praxes of dialogic reflection.

Marcel's responsive reflection functions as an auditory experience. One hears an invocation from and one responds by attending to. The broken world calls upon Marcel for a response. His experience of ontological exigence calls upon Marcel for an acknowledgment of being. One's own being, as being in the world, is a calling upon. Marcel's description of reflection as responsive sounds alongside works by Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. Marcel's reflection as responsive and dialogic adds to communication scholarship on listening and dialogic ethics.

As an "I" who being as called upon, Marcel's philosophy sounds in response to his world. That world surrounds Marcel as the broken world. The world appears to Marcel as broken due to technics and intersubjective relationships. Amid technical environments marked by dislocation and disconnection, persons have lost their sense of being *with* other persons. Persons in the broken world have not reflected upon primordial questions like "Who am I?" Persons living in the broken world are unable to recognize the presence of an other person. The presence of the other makes an invocation upon a person. The person may or may not hear or recognize the calling. Marcel contended that reflection upon one's own existence uncovers an "underlying unity which ties me to other beings" (*Mystery of Being* 2: 17). Attentiveness to one's own being in the world reveals that one is always in relation to others. Marcel's description of intersubjectivity as invocation sounds alongside dialogue and interpersonal communication scholarship.

Gabriel Marcel resisted being named existentialist, phenomenologist, idealist, or metaphysician. His philosophical reflections on body, the world, being, intersubjectivity,

and technics sound unsystematically throughout his books and plays. His ideas do not permit categorization. He named his ideas “a search for, or an investigation into,” (*Mystery of Being* 1: 1) shared as an *homo viator*: a traveller passing through the world, open to experiences, and pausing to share his reflections. Communication as dialogue cannot be strictly defined in meaning or praxes. Communication as dialogue is a passing through and an opening for sharing meaning and action. Marcel’s reflections on body, being, and intersubjectivity contribute to the meaning and praxes of communication as dialogue.

Summary

Life in contemporary technological age is shaped by the emergence of ever-new promises sounding upon the world broken by technology. Some promises propose technical solutions as improvements for life. Other promises warn that technological progress will end in catastrophe. This project has presented Gabriel Marcel’s philosophy as both a proposal and a warning for persons in the broken world. Marcel’s philosophy offers dialogic praxes, as reflection and practices, for being in my body, attending to being, and being *with* others in the world broken by technology.

In Chapter One, Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) was situated in the setting of France during the twentieth century modern and postmodern historical moment. A being-in-situation, Marcel’s philosophy and approach to the world was situated in and shaped by his societal, technological, and cultural contexts. The three acts of Paris constitute significant life settings for Marcel. His life events situated within these societal settings shaped his philosophical approach and worldview. Marcel attended to both the presence of being and concrete *beings* in the world. A being in a situation, he reflected upon his

own *being* always as bound in *a* situation. Marcel approached philosophy from a real, particular place: twentieth century France, a world broken in bodies, perspectives, and relationships.

Chapter Two introduced Marcel's philosophy of the body as one's vital positioning in the world. One relates to the world in, with, and through one's body. To be in body means to be in *this* body that is also *my* body. Marcel called this experience incarnate being. Incarnate being forms one's ground for and of existence. Marcel explored this primordial experience of being-body as shaping one's vital experience of one's self and others. One's existence in body involves a positioning toward and from the world. Positioning signals a freedom to choose possible ways of positioning oneself toward others or toward oneself. Marcel's philosophy of body as relating-in-body, being-in-presence-of, and feeling the presence of others offers dialogic praxes.

Chapter Three summarized Marcel's description of experiences of the broken world and his call to reflection upon one's own *being* in the world. In the broken world modern persons experience spirit of abstraction, focusing on one's function, feeling uneasiness and even despair. Marcel suggested that feeling uneasiness in the broken world reveals significant characteristics of being human. The human person lacks something. One experiences the broken world because one has lost one's "sense of being" ("Ontological Mystery" 9). Restlessness in the world reveals one's longing for *being* as an ontological exigence. One's longing for being calls one to *search for* being.

Marcel proposed reflection as a way one could search for and understand being. One knows and understands the world as participant in being, part-active and part-receptive. Reflection offers a path to healing for being-in-the-broken world. As one

reflects upon being in the world, one must discern life situations as problems and mysteries. One may use primary reflection to attend to problems, but mysteries must can be addressed with secondary reflection. Secondary reflection is a pausing, inward recollection upon human situations. He contended that in this recollection one would intuit the presence of being in each person. In reflection upon being, one could open oneself to experiences of transcendence. Then this chapter proposed in responsive reflection, one engages dialogic praxes, a being attending to and in open toward the world.

In Chapter Four, Marcel's description of intersubjectivity includes acknowledgement of and praxes in ways of being *with* and available *for* others. This project explored six dimensions of intersubjectivity found in Marcel's work: intersubjectivity as invocations, being co-present, relating as I-thou, availability and unavailability, creative fidelity, communion, and as nexus of existence. In being *with* others, persons become aware of being co-present and being *with* an other person. A person relates to the other person as a he or as a person invoked as *thou*. Marcel's relations of availability and unavailability constitute praxes of response during intersubjective meeting. In moments of co-presence, participating persons may experience communication and communion. Intersubjectivity as co-presence and being-*with* reveals a dialogic meeting in the heart of existence. Marcel's attitudes of intersubjectivity offer dialogic praxes as recognizing and acknowledging presence, selecting attitudes as positioning toward the other person, and opening oneself to communion.

Chapter Five described how Marcel's philosophy of technics attends to relationships between technics and persons in changing environments, in relations to technics, and interactions between persons. Changes in technical environments bring human persons feelings of dislocation and disconnection. Technical approaches toward one's own life lead to reductive views of the value of one's life. Marcel saw technocratic attitudes practiced as techniques of degradation and unavailability between persons. Technical changes upon human living also present challenges for dialogue. Persons addressing these technical changes face a complex problem, a metaproblem. A metaproblem invites an *other* solution. Marcel called for a metatechnical response, a response other than a technical response.

Chapter Six, as conclusion to this project, includes a proposed metatechnical response for the problems presented by technology. This project offers Marcel's philosophy of being in body, attending to being, and being with others as response to the problems presented by technology. A world broken by technology invites a dialogic response. Marcel's philosophy offers dialogic praxes. Thus, Marcel's philosophy offers dialogic praxes for being in my body, attending to being, and being *with* others in the world broken by technology. This last chapter explicates how Marcel's philosophy offers dialogic praxes in three parts.

I brought Marcel's reflections alongside contemporary experience of technology. Marcel's philosophy reflects upon and responds to problems in his particular historical moment. Marcel's historical moment in France shares similar features with this project's contemporary historical moment. This final chapter examines the shared features of Marcel's world broken by technics and the contemporary world broken by technology.

Both Marcel's world and the contemporary world include modern and postmodern conditions and commitments. These conditions and commitments constitute the world broken by technology. The contemporary problems of technology create a metaproblem. A metaproblem invites an *other* solution, a metatechnical response.

Marcel's philosophy, as reflection and practice, offers dialogic praxes for being in my body, attending to being, and being *with* others in the world broken by technology. Marcel announces a hope for *persons* navigating a technological world. Next, I addressed the significance of this work for the field of communication. Marcel's philosophy contributes to significant discussions about body, reflection and dialogue in contemporary technological environments.

Marcel's philosophy offers dialogic praxes for being in my body, attending to being, and being *with* others in the world broken by technology. Marcel's hope in human persons rests in his belief in the human person's capacity for reflection and action in the world. From within the broken world, Marcel's philosophy sounds a promise for dialogue. For persons feeling dislocated amid technological environments, dialogic positioning locates beings in, with, and through body in the world. For persons feeling a lack of space for reflecting upon, responsive reflection calls attention to the need felt at the heart of experience and invites recollecting oneself within the world that is broken. In disconnections and absences experienced in technical environments, persons may extend dialogic attitudes toward others by being *with* and available for others in the broken world. Marcel's dialogic praxes promise persons that being *with* and available for other persons signals healing pathways between persons as fellow journeyers, *homines viatores*.

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